"THE GREATEST KING"

An Animated Feature

Screenplay by

Coleman Luck
&
Carel Gage Luck

Lyrics and Music by

Al Kasha

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE UNIVERSE -- NIGHT

Infinity. The majestic darkness of the universe. Flying with incredible speed. Surrounded by galaxies...spiraling... colliding. Through the fire of the Cygnus Loop and the golden, trailing smoke of the Helix Nebula.

Deeper. Into the star clouds of Magellan...piercing the Eye of the Hour Glass. Then, searing through the blinding heat of a supernova. On and on.

Suddenly, in the distance, a point of brilliant light becomes visible. It grows larger and larger. And as it grows, there is singing. A choir of untold millions is joined in exultation.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

Suspended in the universe is a burning mountain so huge that the stars and galaxies are like fireflies swarming around it.

Closer.

The singing is everywhere.

Brilliant light is coming from the summit. At the top is a blinding Fire. Spires of white-hot flame streak out into the universe like the points of a crown.

ANGLE ON BASE OF MOUNTAIN

At the foot of the mountain, looking up toward the top, is the most beautiful creature ever seen. It's an angel clothed in fiery rainbows. His hair sparkles with stars. In his golden eyes there is majesty, power, and love. Slowly, he lifts his hands. In them is an offering. It is the incense of the dawn, for he is LUCIFER, Son of the Morning.

LUCIFER
(echoing)
ALL PRAISE TO GOD WHO SITS ON THE MIGHTY THRONE? ALL PRAISE TO THE HOLY ONE!

As the singing surrounds him, he begins to climb a path toward the summit. Behind him, the stars and galaxies follow...sweeping out like a shining river of eternity.

Higher and higher, the great angel climbs, trailing rainbows and star clouds, his face filled with ecstasy. But, halfway up, he slows...then stops. He stares into a shining mirror-like surface and sees himself. He whispers in a beautiful voice:

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
(whispering)
How beautiful I am. More beautiful and powerful than any living creature.
(beat)
Look at me, I'm Lucifer, Son of the Morning. And I am as beautiful as God.

He turns. Behind him, sweeping away into the universe is glory, his own amazing beauty mingling with the stars. But they are not simply stars. Every one is a singing angel. Following him are the hosts of Heaven on their way to the Throne of God.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
See how the angels follow. Listen to their singing. Why should they worship Him, when they can worship Me?

As he stares, his face begins to change. No longer is it filled with love. All that's left is majesty and power. He lifts the burning offering in his hands and throws it toward the starry hosts. Then, he cries out, singing to the universe:

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
(singing)
By way of introduction
The mighty Devil is my name
I'm the God you should worship
Temptation, magic are my game...

He preens before the gathered hosts.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
This beautiful angel you see
Don't you simply adore me?
No God ever could compare
Come after or before me
I will be God's equal
There will be no sequel
I should be the one in control
I want Heaven's heart
I want Heaven's soul

He waves his hands. As the fiery offering sweeps out over the angels, it changes into sparkling rain and glistening rainbows. Color and light almost fill the universe.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
So, angels bow and worship me
Behind these heavenly doors
There's beauty, pleasures and treasures
The whole universe is yours...

As the rainbows swirl they become the gigantic face of Lucifer. It's so huge and amazing it could almost be the Face of God. A third of the angels are dazzled by it. The rain settles in their eyes. But the others are horrified. They streak away.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
You will have your boundless freedom
As God tried to enslave you
I will give you power and glory
That wimpy God never gave you.
I will be God's equal
There will be no sequel
I should be the one in control
I'll rule Heaven's heart
I'll rule Heaven's soul.

Lucifer waves his hands again. The lovely rain that has fallen into the angel's eyes begins to burn like the fires of hell. Their faces become like his.

Suddenly, there is a terrifying roar. Streaks of fire lash outward from the summit. Lucifer turns and looks up. At the pinnacle of the Mountain, seated on a throne circled with rainbows above a crystal sea, is PERSON who is the Source of all Light. His face is not visible for the brightness of His Being. From Him comes a great, soft voice filled with infinite sorrow.

PERSON OF LIGHT
HOW YOU HAVE FALLEN, OH LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING. YOU WERE FULL OF WISDOM AND PERFECT IN BEAUTY. BUT YOUR PERFECTION HAS BEEN DESTROYED BY PRIDE.

Suddenly, a creature of light steps out from beneath the throne. In his hands is a dazzling sword. This is MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL. Slowly, he descends toward Lucifer.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL
(singing)
You're a tainted angel, Lucifer
You're a liar and a fraud
Nothing but a jealous foe
Who do you think, you're God?

You're the enemy of Heaven
We will throw and cast you down
Only God the Father
Is the One who wears the crown

God is a Life-giver
From evil He'll deliver
God's the One in control
God rules Heaven's heart
God rules Heaven's soul...

Lucifer stares up at him malevolently.

LUCIFER
I've expected you, Michael
Trying to stand up for God
You're a warrior for the Lord
This is no place for you to trod

The closer the archangel from the throne comes toward him, the more the beauty of Lucifer is changed. The rainbows vanish.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
Reigning with God's golden rod
I will sit on heaven's throne
Like God I'll rule the heavenlies
And Heaven I will own.
I'll be like the Holy One
I won't be second to none
I should be the one in control
I want Heaven's heart
I want Heaven's soul...

Millions of star creatures raise their fists in exultation to Lucifer. New singing begins -- dark and powerful:

THE DEMONS
We'll rule, we'll rule
We go to Satan's school
We are the demons who attack
We're Satan's special army pack
We'll rule, we'll rule
We're the demons on patrol
And Satan will rule your heart
He will rule your soul.

Michael points back toward the throne. From out of it blazes the purest Light.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL
God on high for He is the Greatest King
Has created all planets, stars and seas
Lit the whole universe
Designed the galaxies

God will be our fortress
He will shield us from fright
He sits high above you Devil
And the terror of the night

Truth and light are God's mark
From the forces of the dark
God's the One in control
And God will rule your heart
He will rule your soul.

In the light from the Throne swirl the galaxies of the universe. The angels who have not fallen surround the Eternal One. The fiery majesty from the Mountain grows larger and larger.

MICHAEL AND THE ANGELS

God rules, God rules
Sitting at His footstools
We are the angels who defend
From Heaven's army we descend
God rules, God rules
We're the angels on patrol
And God will rule your heart
He will save your soul.

Lucifer stares upward in horror. His face becomes covered with leprous scales. His golden eyes begin to burn with brimstone and hatred. As Michael moves toward him, lightning flashes out from the Throne, empowering his sword. The Voice of Eternal Glory thunders into the universe.

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)

NO LONGER ARE YOU LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING. I CALL YOU SATAN, ENEMY OF HEAVEN. AND YOU ARE CAST DOWN.

Michael's sword sweeps over Satan and his hosts. Instantly, there is a shriek from a million voices and the angels begin to fall. Down...down...through the universe.

EXT. THE UNIVERSE

As Satan streaks downward, his form changes into a dragon with a tail of fire. As he and his burning hosts fall through the darkness, their shrieking continues. They become burning stars. But one star is greater than all the rest. Like a giant asteroid, it races toward a shadowed planet. In the star is the face of Satan. The planet is earth.

EXT. SHADOWED PLANET -- NIGHT

When the ball of fire hits, the explosion mushrooms upward. Burning waves ripple out. In the fire are the hideous faces of the fallen angels. When the flames are gone, all is silent and the earth is lost in darkness once more.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)

(singing)

In the beginning God created
The heavens and the earth
Darkness covered the face of the deep
Empty, cold, with little worth

Let there be, let there be, and so it was

(MORE)

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Let there be, let there be, and so it was...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLACK OCEAN -- NIGHT

Black, crashing waves. An endless chaos of raging water. Then, a shimmering light hovers over the deep.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
With the power of His word
He created day and night
And He said forevermore
Let there be light, and there was light

Let there be, let there be, and so it was
Let there be, let there be, and so there was...

The ocean turns a stunning blue.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Less than seven days went by
Creating mountains, river, sky...

A MONTAGE OF CREATION BEGINS:

The sky appears and then the land. On it springs up vegetation...trees and plants of every kind. Over it all glistens a canopy of golden mist bathed in the sun. Fish leap from the waters. Birds fly. Animals walk through forest glens.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fish, birds, creatures of the land
Came from God's awesome hand
Let there be, let there be, and so it was...
Let there be, let there be, and so it was...

EXT. TREES BESIDE WATERFALL -- DAY

Beside a beautiful waterfall stand the first man and woman.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
God created man and woman
Named them Adam and Eve
He said don't eat forbidden fruit
And the garden you won't leave
Let there be, let there be, and so it was...

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. GARDEN OF EDEN -- DAY

Eve is walking alone through the lovely Garden of Eden. Birds are singing. Morning mist is drifting away. She is exulting in the beauty and softness around her. Animals approach. She laughs and touches them lovingly. As she walks, she picks a piece of fruit and eats it. Suddenly, a soft, musical voice calls out to her:

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
Eve...Eve...

She looks around, but doesn't see anyone. The voice calls again, filled with gentle laughter.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm over here.

EVE
Who is it? I can't see you. Where are you?

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
Keep walking...on through the trees.

Eve walks between soft, fur trees and emerges into a clearing. In the center is a solitary tree that's very different than all the rest. It's beautiful, but the beauty is dark. Its leaves and branches are lost in shadows, softened by mist that drips like tears.

Floating in the branches of the tree are the breathtaking colors of the rainbow. Like northern lights in miniature, they drift and swirl to the ground. Eve is in awe as she walks up to it.

EVE
Oh, it's so lovely.

The voice speaks to her from deep in the rainbows.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
So, you've found me.

EVE
Who are you? I've never talked to you before. Are you making the colors in the tree?

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
I make all things beautiful. Have you tasted its fruit?

EVE
No. The Creator has told us if we touch it, we will die.

The voice laughs softy, musically.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
Eve, you're beautiful, but you aren't wise.

EVE
What do you mean?

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
Can you know light without knowing darkness? Can you know pleasure without knowing pain. To know all things you must taste all things. Truth means nothing without the mystery of lies.

EVE
I don't understand. Your words are so strange.

Slowly, the rainbows congeal. Wound in the branches of the tree appears a long, sleek, form with exquisite, mist-covered plumes. From its shoulders extend human arms. It's legs are like a reptile. Its face is that of a man and a serpent molded into one. Eve stares in wonder.

EVE (CONT'D)
What are you? You're not like the other animals. Are you an angel?

SATAN, THE SERPENT
Oh, I'm much more than an angel. And I can make you wise. The fruit of this tree won't kill you. The Creator knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like Him, knowing good and evil. Don't you want to be like God?

The creature reaches out and picks a piece of the fruit. It's soft and covered with mist.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (CONT'D)
Touch it. It won't hurt you.

He holds it out to her. Cautiously, she touches it with one finger.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (CONT'D)
(laughing softly)
Well, have you died?

EVE
No.

SATAN, THE SERPENT
So, He lied to you, then. Go ahead, taste it. Don't be afraid. You'll be powerful just like Him.

Carefully, Eve takes a bite. The instant the fruit enters her mouth, a strange look comes into her eyes. Her innocence is gone.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (CONT'D)
Now, quick, take some to your husband.

Taking another piece of fruit, Eve runs off into the forest. As the serpent watches her go, he laughs softly. The trees around him become filled with the faces of his evil host. He begins to whisper-sing his song:

SATAN, THE SERPENT (CONT'D)
(singing)
I'll razzle them
Bedazzle them
Lure them under my control
And I will rule their hearts
I will rule their soul

I will rule their hearts
I will rule their soul...

EXT. TREES BESIDE WATERFALL -- DAY

Eve finds Adam beside the waterfall. Holding out the fruit, she smiles. He looks at it...then, at her. Slowly, he takes it from her...and eats.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.)
I'll cause confusion with illusion
They will fall into my trap
They'll think it's Heaven though it's hell
They'll be eating from my lap...

As Adam and Eve continue eating, a haunted look comes to their eyes. Suddenly, the trees of the garden seem to be filled with dark shadows. Evil eyes stare at them. They become frightened. Eden is no longer a lovely and safe place. Mist swirls in the air. Mysterious faces appear that are beautiful, but deeply evil. Some are male and some are female, but none are human.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll play my many guises
With my voodoo hoodoo hex
With my perfumed, luscious lips
(MORE)

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Enticing them with sex...

The war is on
Let the battle begin
I will crush God's people
I'll break them with sin...

The lovely, evil faces draw closer and closer to Adam and Eve. The females around the man, the males around the woman.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll drug them with potions
Drown them with wine
They can't resist
I'm the hippest hypnotist

The evil angels hold out potions and golden baubles that drift in the air. Adam and Eve are dazzled and confused. Above the trees, Satan appears like a kingly avatar, a majestic spirit in a white robe. In his cupped hands is golden light.

SATAN, THE SERPENT (CONT'D)
I will fake a saintly king
Bribing them with shiny gold
They'll fawn and follow me
I'll have them in the devil's fold.

They'll pay me with their loyalty
And it will take its toll
I will rule their hearts
I will rule their soul.

Suddenly, Adam and Eve hear a deep, majestic Voice calling to them through the trees.

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)
Adam. Adam, where are you?

Instantly, the misty, beautiful visions of evil vanish away. Satan and his hordes disappear. Off through the trees Adam and Eve see the Person of Light from the starry mountain. The brilliance is so great that His face is not visible. He's walking toward them. They are terrified. Adam whispers to Eve:

ADAM
It's the Creator. We're naked. Run and hide.

They run off into the forest. The Person of Light calls out with great sorrow.

PERSON OF LIGHT
Adam. Adam, what have you done?

He follows the man and woman into the trees.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
(singing)
Adam and Eve disobeyed
Betrayed the human race
Turned away the one who loved them
Didn't seek God's Holy Face

Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...
(suggested material for lyrics)
Because of their disobedience, evil and suffering and death came into the world. When people stopped worshipping the Creator, Satan became their god.

EXT. ANCIENT HIGH PLACE -- DAY

Smoke rises as a dancing crowd sacrifices to a huge idol carved of stone. It's a gigantic serpent with diamond eyes that glisten in the sun.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
God made a promise to destroy
Satan's evil, ugly plan
He chose the nation Israel
To give Light to every man

Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...

EXT. PLAIN BELOW MT. SINAI -- DAY

The nation of Israel is gathered beneath Mount Sinai. Clouds and lightning surround the summit. Moses is holding up the tablets of the Law.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE -- DAY

A glistening temple rises over the white city of Jerusalem.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
(suggested material for lyrics)
In the city of Jerusalem the Jews built a temple where sacrifices were made to the Eternal Creator God.
(MORE)

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He had told them that only the shedding of blood from the purest animals would pay the price for sin.

INT. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE -- DAY

Inside the temple, priests in robes watch as a sacrifice burns on the altar.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE TEMPLE -- DAY

A crowd is gathered. They're putting up a serpent idol in the courtyard of God's temple. A priest is speaking to them, pleading with them. But, they won't listen. With angry faces, they turn and throw stones at him.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
God spoke through priests and kings
With warning prophecies
Still they disobeyed God's voice
And were brought down to their knees

Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...

MORPHING OF UNIFORMS

Conquerors sweep through Jerusalem. As they move, their uniforms change. First Assyrian, then, Babylonian, then Greek...and finally Roman.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Conquering armies of Assyrians,
The Babylonians, the Greek
Made them slaves in the wilderness
And their world turned dark and bleak...

Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it was...

Roman legions slash their way into Jerusalem. People scream and run. The banners of Caesar fly over God's city.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- DAY

On a luxurious throne lounges a very fat man with a crown on his head. His pudgy fingers are covered with gaudy rings.

Tiny, black eyes stare outward through slits in his puffy flesh. Two slaves fan his sweaty body while two more hold trays of food. He eats fastidiously, carefully dropping "dainties" into his cavernous mouth. This is HEROD THE GREAT.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
The Roman king Herod
Chained Israel's sons
Herod drew the spear and sword
Against God's chosen ones

Time after time, time after time...

In front of Herod stand two guards. Between them is an emaciated PRISONER draped in heavy chains. He's so weak that he can hardly move. He trembles as he pleads for his life.

PRISONER
(almost in tears)
Please, your majesty. I've given you everything. There's nothing left.

Herod wipes his greasy mouth on the robe of a slave and eases himself into a sitting position.

HEROD THE GREAT
Do you really mean nothing? Nothing as in absolutely zero, zilch?

PRISONER
Yes, my Lord. You have it all.

HEROD THE GREAT
(with charming sweetness)
You're trying to fool me again aren't you, Jonas? It's not good to lie to your king.

PRISONER
No, my lord, I swear I'm telling the truth. My wife and children are begging in the streets.

HEROD THE GREAT
(softly, tenderly)
Well, there you see? You <u>do</u> have something left. A wife and children. Aren't they worth more than anything in the world?

PRISONER
Yes, my lord.

HEROD THE GREAT
And they're worth something to me too.

The prisoner looks aghast. Herod gives him an evil smile. On the wall behind the throne appears the shadow of a Great Serpent.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
We can't allow your wife and precious little ones to continue begging. Not when you owe me so much money.

Herod's face grows cold.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
(to the guards')
Get his family and sell them as slaves. And throw this pig into a dungeon until he rots.

The soldiers drag the man away, screaming.

PRISONER
NO, NO, MY LORD. PLEASE HAVE MERCY...MERCY...

HEROD THE GREAT
Mercy, what a quaint idea. I simply love these Jews.

Herod smiles and eats another dainty. The voice of a Chamberlain announces:

CHAMBERLAIN (O.S.)
Your majesty, the royal scholars have arrived.

Herod looks up. Five shriveled old men in robes stand trembling in front of him. He stares at them.

HEROD THE GREAT
(sweetly)
My brilliant scholars have come to see me?

SCHOLAR
Yes...my lord.

HEROD THE GREAT
(harshly)
It took you long enough. I want to know about these ancient prophecies. My spies tell me the people are talking about them on every street corner.

SCHOLAR
We've searched the sacred writings, your majesty.

Herod leans his great bulk forward. It's a very threatening move. The old men step back.

HEROD THE GREAT
And just exactly, what have you found?

SCHOLAR
(with a huge gulp)
Well...my-my lord...by-by-by our calcal...culations...

HEROD THE GREAT
SPEAK UP!

SCHOLAR
Yes, my Lord...

The old man's voice gets squeakier. Slowly the other four old men slide in trying to hide behind him.

SCHOLAR (CONT'D)
...The-the K-K-King Messiah..who will save G-G-God's people...is about...to be b-b-b-b-born.

For a split second, Herod stares with his beady eyes. Then, he jumps to his feet, knocking over the trays of food and SCREAMS.

HEROD THE GREAT
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

The old men are shaking so badly they almost pee in their togas.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
DID YOU SAY A <u>KING</u>...IS ABOUT TO BE <u>BORN</u>?

SCHOLAR
(stuttering in terror)
I-I-I-I-I'm af-fr-fr-fr-fraid so, my-my-my-my-my lord.

HEROD THE GREAT
NOOOOO!

The scholars are almost blown back against the wall. The whole room shakes. The slaves and guards tremble.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
TREASON. HOW DARE YOU? INTO THE DUNGEONS WITH THEM ALL.

The old men literally fall over each other trying to run from the room. The guards are right behind them. The slaves try to hide. Like an enraged bull Herod charges forward.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
A KING? ANOTHER KING?

He rushes out the huge doors.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE CASTLE -- CONTINUOUS

Herod roars through the castle throwing furniture and people out of his way.

HEROD THE GREAT
I AM THE KING. I AM...THE ONLY KING.

But, suddenly, he hears a sinister, yet seductive voice calling his name.

SATAN (O.S.)
Herod...Hey, Herod...

HEROD THE GREAT
WHO DARES TO DISTURB ME?

A smoky shadow drifts across the wall.

SATAN (O.S.)
Over here. Look up.

A smiling face filled with charm begins to form from a shadow on the wall.

HEROD THE GREAT
Who are <u>you</u>?

SATAN
(singing)
I'm your conscience and your friend
protect your sovereign power
Your advisor to the end
Every minute, every hour.

The face drifts close to Herod and sings into his ear. Suddenly, Herod looks almost mesmerized.

SATAN (CONT'D)
There's been a bad report
I'm afraid I have bad news
The Son of God will soon be born
To those pious, trusting Jews.

Herod's face contorts with rage and fear.

HEROD THE GREAT
(singing)
I absolutely tire
Of the Jews and their Messiah
Thinking he will set them free
But don't they understand
They have to deal with me...

Herod storms down the hall. The ghostly shadow of the serpent with its charming face winds around and above him.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
There can't be two kings here...

SATAN
There can't be two kings here
You should make that absolutely clear...

SATAN AND HEROD
There can't be two kings here...

HEROD THE GREAT
I'm fed up with the Jewish prophecy
And predictions of some savior
On some old parchment scroll...

SATAN
Every two years, every two days
It's absurd, another word and their lives will be the toll!

Satan coils himself on a great armchair and smiles sweetly.

SATAN (CONT'D)
They take the Roman kings for fools
And when their little king is grown
He'll want your gold and sparkling jewels
And throw you off your throne...

Like a spring, Satan leaps off the chair toward the ceiling. Then, he drifts down. With his arm around Herod's shoulders, they sing together.

SATAN AND HEROD
There can't be two kings here
There can't be two kings here...

SATAN
You'll make that rabble disappear...

HEROD THE GREAT
Yes, you're right, there can't be two kings here!

SATAN AND HEROD
THERE CAN'T BE TWO KINGS HERE!

EXT. THE UNIVERSE -- THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

The last words of Herod's song echo into the universe...to the very summit of the Mountain of God. The Person of Light hears it as He sits on the Rainbow Throne. The Great Voice rings out to the starry host stretched beneath Him.

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)
NOW IS THE TIME. I WILL DO WHAT I HAVE PROMISED. LET THE DAY OF DELIVERANCE BEGIN.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. ARABIAN DESERT -- NIGHT

Moonlight shines down on an endless desert. Gigantic, rolling waves of sand seem to go on forever. A caravan of camels is stopped on a large dune. Their leaders, three wealthy men in white robes and turbans, stand together looking up at the sky. One of them is using a navigational device. He's pointing it at a star that's brighter than all the rest. The man's name is BALTHAZAR.

BALTHAZAR
Every night it gets a little brighter. No question about it. It's a royal star. The ancient prophecies are about to be fulfilled.
(beat)
But we still have a long way to go.

EXT. HUMBLE ISRAELI TOWN -- NIGHT

Moonlight shines down on a humble Israeli village. At the edge of the town is a small house.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A young, teenage girl lies sleeping. This is MARY. Suddenly, the room is filled with the sound of a mysterious, echoing wind. The girl stirs -- then awakens, terrified.

MARY
Who is it? Someone's here.

GABRIEL, THE ANGEL (O.S.)
(softly)
Mary...Mary...don't be afraid.

A soft, golden glow is shining through the open door leading outside.

GABRIEL, THE ANGEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mary...get up and follow me.

As though in a dream, Mary gets up and walks toward the light.

EXT. HUMBLE ISRAELI TOWN -- MOMENTS LATER

The light leads Mary out of the sleeping town...

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE OF TOWN -- MOMENTS LATER

...And into a beautiful woods. It stops in a small clearing. As Mary stares in wonder, the light burns more brightly. In it stands a tall, strong, Angel. This is GABRIEL. When she sees him, Mary falls to her knees. He speaks in an echoing whisper.

GABRIEL, THE ANGEL
The lord of Heaven and earth is with you, Mary. I'm Gabriel and I come from the Throne of God. Listen carefully. You'll become pregnant and give birth to a Son. You're to name Him Jesus. He'll be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. He'll be the King Messiah. The Lord will give Him the Throne of His father David and His reign will never end.

MARY
(so amazed she can hardly speak)
But, how can this happen? I'm engaged, but I'm not married yet. I'm a virgin.

GABRIEL, THE ANGEL
This night God's Holy Spirit will come upon you with His Power. That's why the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

MARY
What should I tell my fiancé, Joseph?

GABRIEL, THE ANGEL
Don't worry, the Lord will speak to him for you.

Trembling, Mary bows her face to the ground.

MARY
I'm God's servant. Let it be as you've said.

The sound of the wind vanishes. When Mary looks up, the clearing is filled with moonlight. The angel is gone.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH HILL COUNTRY -- EVENING

Large groups of people are traveling. Among them are JOSEPH, a strong man of thirty years old with kind eyes and Mary. She's in her last month of pregnancy. She's riding on a donkey and is very uncomfortable.

JOSEPH
I'm worried about you, Mary. The baby could come any time.

MARY
Joseph, will you stop worrying? God will take care of us.

JOSEPH
I should've left you back home.

MARY
But I want to be with you when the baby is born. It's not your fault you have to travel so far to pay taxes.

Joseph shakes his head.

JOSEPH
Bethlehem is still four hours away.

They continue on.

EXT. BETHLEHEM -- NIGHT

Mary is sitting on the ground next to her donkey. She's in labor and in great pain. Around her the town is crowded with travelers. While she waits for Joseph she prays.

MARY
Oh, Father in Heaven, I'm hurting so much. Please help him find a place to stay.

Joseph walks up. He's very tense.

JOSEPH
All the inns are full. I couldn't find a single room.

MARY
(beginning to cry)
Oh, dear God, help us. The baby's almost here.

JOSEPH
An old woman told me about a cave outside of town. They use it as a stable. There's clean straw and water. It's the best we can do.

Carefully, he helps her up.

INT. STABLE CAVE -- NIGHT

Mary lies on a bed of straw in a cave. She cries out in pain as Joseph delivers her child. Moments later, the cries of a newborn fill the air.

EXT. FIELDS OUTSIDE OF BETHLEHEM -- NIGHT

The fields near Bethlehem are filled with sheep on their way to Jerusalem. Five poor shepherds are sleeping around a fire. Suddenly, they hear the echo of a choir singing. They open their eyes. As they stare upward, they see an incredible sight. The stars of the universe are descending toward them. The singing grows louder. Suddenly, the stars begin to change. Above them is an infinity of angels

SINGING ANGELS
PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO MEN. PEACE AND GOOD WILL TO MEN...

Then, one great angel taller than the trees stands in front of them. With a voice like roaring water he speaks:

ANGEL
DON'T BE AFRAID. I BRING NEWS OF GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL PEOPLE. TODAY A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN. HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD. HERE'S HOW YOU WILL KNOW HIM. YOU'LL FIND A BABY WRAPPED IN CLOTHS AND LYING IN A MANGER.

The singing and the light rush over the shepherds like a wave. They fall on their faces. When they look up the angels are gone and the sky is filled with stars.

EXT. FIELD NEAR STABLE CAVE -- LATER

Shouting with joy, the shepherds run through a field...toward firelight that comes from the entrance to a cave.

INT. STABLE CAVE -- MOMENTS LATER

Quietly, Joseph ushers the shepherds into the stable. Mary is lying asleep on a bed of hay. Beside her is the baby JESUS. Slowly, the men kneel in awe.

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- NIGHT

Torches burn in Herod's throne room casting evil shadows. The King sits erect on his throne. The weasel-eyed old man is very angry, but he's covering it with sweetness. In front of him stand the three wise men who were traveling through the desert.

HEROD THE GREAT
You've traveled a long way to find a baby. Don't you have enough babies in your own country?

BALTHAZAR
Our prophecies and calculations go back a thousand years. They tell us he'll be the greatest king who's ever lived.

Herod's eyes narrow. Behind him on the wall, unseen by human eyes, appears the shadow of the Great Serpent.

HEROD THE GREAT
Is that right? The greatest king! Well, how lucky I am that he's been born into my humble domain. A baby with his own star. It's enough to make me take up astronomy.

BALTHAZAR
We're very close to finding him.

HEROD THE GREAT
Well, I'm sorry my scholars can't help you. But, when you do find him, come and tell me so I can worship him too. It'd make me so very happy. Promise me now. Don't let me down.

The wise men bow and leave the room. When they're gone, Herod sits trembling, his face filled with hate. Sweat drips from his greasy hair. Slowly the ghost of the serpent begins to coil around his throne. Suddenly, he screams in rage:

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
BRING IN THE ROYAL SCHOLARS!

Once more, Herod and the serpent begin roaring their song:

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
There can't be two kings here
There can't be two kings here

The serpent rises above him.

SATAN, THE SERPENT
Rumor he's the Son of God
Born of virgin birth
To conquer all the Romans
Build God's kingdom here on earth.

When the Messiah will appear
The weak will run and never tire
The blind will see, the deaf will hear
He'll fill them with his Holy Spirit Fire

INTERCUT

EXT. FIELD NEAR STABLE CAVE -- NIGHT

While Herod and Satan continue to sing, in the darkness of the Judean night the wise men and their caravan stand in a field. Balthazar takes another calculation. The star is above the entrance to a stable cave. He points. With their servants carrying gifts, the men walk toward it.

INT. STABLE CAVE -- MOMENTS LATER

Filled with amazement, Joseph ushers the wise men into the cave. Mary is sitting up, holding the baby. She stares as the richly dressed men bow down and lay gifts before her Son.

INT. HEROD'S CASTLE -- NIGHT

Herod stands in front of a blazing fireplace. His face gleams with red light. Above the mantle, the Serpent hangs like a living tapestry.

HEROD THE GREAT
I won't share my world with some child
Who has these Jews beguiled
They think their king has come
But I'm their real king
They'll be under my thumb

Suddenly, the guards drag in the Royal Scholars. They're filthy and weighed down with chains from the dungeon. The old men are shaking with fear.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
TELL ME ON PAIN OF DEATH! WHERE IS THIS MESSIAH TO BE BORN?

SCHOLAR #2
(cowering)
The Scriptures say...in Bethlehem...my Lord.

HEROD THE GREAT
TAKE THEM AWAY TO DIE!

The guards herd the old men out. The Great Serpent crawls down from the mantle, through the fire, and into the room.

HEROD THE GREAT (CONT'D)
There can't be two kings here

SATAN, THE SERPENT
There can't be two kings here
Who are they to interfere?

HEROD AND SATAN
There can't be two kings here.

HEROD THE GREAT
(a talking "vamp")
EVERY MALE CHILD THAT'S BORN
WHO IS UNDER TWO
I'LL SLAY EACH AND EVERY ONE
KILL EVERY SINGLE JEW

Bring in guards with swords and shields adrawn
Send them throughout Bethlehem
Bring me proof their king is dead

INTERCUT

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Dozens of armed guards carrying torches rush down the halls.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD -- NIGHT

By torchlight, the guards jump on their horses and head out of the castle.

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- NIGHT

Herod and Satan continue their song. The Serpent is coiled. His shadowy body gleams in the firelight.

SATAN, THE SERPENT
Search every two minutes, every two hours
It's outrageous, it's contagious,
and you will have his head!

With one decision
You'll bring down their mindless vision
They will never cross your path
They won't escape your wrath

EXT. JUDEAN COUNTRYSIDE -- NIGHT

Herod's soldiers ride through the darkness. Black clouds swirl around the moon. In front of them the town of Bethlehem is sleeping.

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- NIGHT

HEROD AND SATAN
There can't be two kings here
There can't be two kings here.

So, the fact is
They'll pay with their lives
They'll pay with their taxes

EXT. BETHLEHEM -- NIGHT

The soldiers arrive in Bethlehem. The horses race through the streets. Above and around them, like swirling smoke shriek the faces of Satan's demon pack. Soldiers enter the houses. In silhouette they strike. The people run outside screaming.

EXT. CASTLE TOWER -- NIGHT

Herod stands in an open tower of his castle. Rising above him in the air is the gigantic Serpent. They sing the conclusion of their song.

HEROD AND SATAN
There can't be two kings here
There can't be two kings here
I'm -- You're -- the one they must revere
There can't be two kings here.

EXT. JUDEAN WILDERNESS -- NIGHT

But while the bloodshed rages in Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph and the baby make their way through a quiet, moonlit wilderness.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
But Joseph had been warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus out of Israel. So, before the soldiers arrived, they were gone. They went to Egypt and didn't return until Herod was dead. When they came back, they settled in a small town called Nazareth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NAZARETH -- DAY

The neat, white-washed buildings of Nazareth gleam in the sunlight. On the outskirts of town is a small, carpenter shop.

INT. JOSEPH'S CARPENTER SHOP -- DAY

Years have passed. JESUS, now twelve years old, is working in his father's shop carefully polishing a small, wooden cabinet. Joseph enters and smiles.

JOSEPH
Good work, son. You have the eye of an artist. But, it's time to go. Your mother's ready. Where's the lamb?

JESUS
Out in back. I'll get him.

He heads out the back door.

EXT. REAR OF CARPENTER SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Tied to a fence post is a beautiful, little lamb. Gently, he picks him up.

JESUS
Hey, little fellow, are you ready to go?

The lamb bleats as Jesus puts him over his shoulders and heads around the building.

EXT. FRONT OF CARPENTER SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER

A large group of travelers is on the move and everyone is singing. Carrying the lamb, Jesus joins his mother and father. They begin walking with the larger group. The travelers sing about going to Jerusalem for the Passover, the day long ago when God saved the Jews from the evil power of Pharaoh.

EXT. JERUSALEM -- DAY

Jerusalem is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. White buildings line broad streets. Sunlight flashes on marble and gold. Towering above everything is the majestic Temple of God. Morning songs of joy echo from it's courtyards. This day the city is full of travelers singing "Psalms of Ascent" as they head toward the temple. Among them are Joseph and Mary and Jesus still carrying the lamb.

EXT. TEMPLE COURTYARD -- DAY

Thousands of people have gathered in the main courtyard. Each family brings an approved sacrificial animal to offer to God. Jesus, Mary and Joseph bring their lamb to a priest. Jesus looks lovingly at the small creature. He hugs it. It licks his face.

JOSEPH
(to the priest)
As God has commanded in His Law, we bring this perfect lamb as a sacrifice. May the shedding of its blood bring forgiveness for our sins.

The priest takes the lamb and walks over to the altar. Jesus bows his head in prayer.

INT. SMALLER, TEMPLE COURT -- DAY

The crowds have gone. A group of learned men is seated near a fountain. In front of them stands Jesus, looking at a scroll. He's asking questions and they're amazed at Him.

OLD RABBI
Young man, the Messiah will be a conqueror who'll free us from our enemies. That's what the Scripture says.

JESUS
But, tell me, Fathers, won't he also be a sacrifice for the sins of the people? Isn't that what the prophet Isaiah says?

The old men look at each other. They don't know how to answer him.

OLD RABBI
You have surprising ideas for one so young.

Suddenly, Jesus' mother and father rush up to him. They've been very concerned.

MARY
Son, where have you been? We've been so worried. We've been looking all over the city for you.

JESUS
(gently)
Why were you looking? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?

Mary and Joseph stare at Him.

JOSEPH
Come, son, it's time to go home.

Putting his arms around Jesus and Mary, Joseph leads them away.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
Jesus and his family went back to Nazareth. There, He lived quietly, working each day in the carpenter shop.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOSEPH'S CARPENTER SHOP -- DAY

Jesus is working in Joseph's shop cutting a log into boards. He's sixteen years old now and strong and good looking. Suddenly, he hears shouting. Walking to the door He looks out.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF CARPENTER SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

A gang of boys is standing in a circle yelling at each other. Two boys are in a fight. Fists are flying. Their faces are bloody. Suddenly, straight into the circle walks Jesus. He doesn't say a word, but His presence changes everything. He simply looks at the boys...and the fight stops. The group stares at Him. Then, one by one, they walk away. From a doorway nearby, two old rabbis have seen it all. As they watch Jesus, they smile at each other, nodding their heads in approval.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE OF NAZARETH -- DAY

Roman guards are marching with a gang of prisoners. The heat is unbearable. The men are miserable in their chains. A prisoner begins to lag. A soldier beats him with a whip.

SOLDIER
KEEP WALKING.

Suddenly, one of the prisoners falls to the ground. The soldier with the whip rushes over. He's about to strike when he looks up. Standing in front of him is a young man in his twenties carrying a bucket. It's Jesus. As He stares into the soldier's eyes the whip is lowered. Kneeling down Jesus gives the prisoner a drink. The beaten man looks up at Him. In the water there is life.

BEATEN PRISONER
(whispering)
Oh, thank you. Thank you.

The man stands up and is able to go on. Jesus watches them with great sadness.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
As the years passed, Jesus grew both tall and wise and was loved by God and by all the people around Him.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. CASTLE OF HEROD ANTIPAS -- NIGHT

The dark castle of Herod Antipas rises over the hills of Galilee. From inside comes a woman's raucous, drunken, laugh.

INT. THE KING'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The only light comes from flickering torches. The king's bedroom is luxurious. Above his bed is a great tapestry depicting a serpent interwoven with flowers. HEROD ANTIPAS, the tall, gaunt son of Herod the Great, is carousing with a sensuously beautiful woman. Her name is HERODIAS. They've both been drinking. He stares at her with burning eyes. Then, he tries to kiss her. But, he staggers, pulling her close. Laughing, she looks over his shoulder. Floating near the ceiling in the smoke of the torches is the shadow of the Serpent. She leads Herod toward the door.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
Herod the Great had sons. When he died, his kingdom was divided between them. The province of Galilee was given to his son, Herod Antipas. Like his father, he was an evil man who served Rome. Because of his cruelty the people hated him.

EXT. OPEN HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Herod Antipas and Herodias walk down an open hallway lined with torches. They stagger and laugh. One side of the hall opens out to the countryside. Moonlight streams in. Suddenly, they hear a raging voice coming from the darkness far below.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER (O.S.)
HEROD. HEROD, YOU SNAKE. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME. LISTEN TO ME, HEROD. DO YOU THINK GOD IS BLIND? THE WOMAN YOU'RE WITH IS YOUR BROTHER'S WIFE. GOD SEES WHAT YOU'RE DOING. REPENT AND SEND HER AWAY OR HIS JUDGMENT WILL FALL ON YOU!

The voice goes on raging. Herod and Herodias walk over and look down. A wild figure stands silhouetted in the moonlight.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER (CONT'D)
REPENT, HEROD. REPENT.

Then, the yelling stops and the figure vanishes into the darkness.

HERODIAS
(hissing)
Who was that filthy creature?

HEROD ANTIPAS
I don't know, but I'm going to find out.
(yelling)
GUARD, BRING MY CHIEF SPY.

INT. THRONE ROOM OF HEROD ANTIPAS -- LATER

Herod and Herodias sit in the throne room. The guards drag in a pathetic, plump little man and drop him like a sack of dirt in front of the king. This is ZACH, chief spy and whipping boy. Herod drags him up until he's two inches from his face and rasps:

HEROD ANTIPAS
So, chief spy, Zach. I have a question for you. A wild man was screaming at me from the hills tonight. Your job is to keep track of my enemies. WHO WAS HE?

ZACH
(whimpering slightly)
Well, there are several possibilities, my lord. At the moment, you don't have a very high approval rating. 99 percent of the people hate you.

HEROD ANTIPAS
I WANT HIS NAME.

ZACH
Let me think.
(beat)
Was he wild like this?

Zach's face contorts, his hair sticks straight out and he shrieks in Herod's face.

ZACH (CONT'D)
REPEEEEEEEENT....!

Herod almost jumps out of his skin.

HEROD ANTIPAS
YES!

ZACH
And was there just a touch of "judgmentalism" in his voice? Overly concerned with the private lives of consenting adults?

HEROD ANTIPAS
HE CALLED ME AN ADULTERER AND A SNAKE.

ZACH
(relieved)
Oh, that's just John, the Baptizer. He lives in the desert and eats bugs. He likes to rant and pour water on people, but I think he's harmless.

Herodias grabs Zach by the hair.

HERODIAS
I've heard of this man. He isn't harmless. HE'S STIRRING UP THE PEOPLE.

Herod kicks Zach across the room like a beach ball. He lands in a fountain. Herod rushes over and pulls him out soaking wet.

HEROD ANTIPAS
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, YOU'LL STAY ON THIS BAPTIZER LIKE FLIES ON A DEAD DOG. I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM. <u>EVERYTHING</u>. NOW, GET OUT HERE.

Zach gulps and nods and hurries from the room.

EXT. RIVER JORDAN -- DAY

A huge crowd is gathered on the banks of the River Jordan, listening to JOHN, THE BAPTIZER. His eyes are powerful, but not without compassion. He looks like what he is, a man who lives in the wilderness. His clothes are made of rough, camel's hair. He stands waist deep in the river, preaching. In the crowd at the water's edge is Zach. He's in disguise, dressed as a camel driver with a large, fake mustache.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER
DO YOU WANT GOD TO CLEAN UP YOUR LIFE? THEN, IT'S TIME TO CHANGE YOUR SELFISH WAYS. REPENT! COME DOWN TO THE WATER. LET YOUR CONSCIENCES BE WASHED CLEAN. PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

People line up in front of him and he begins "baptizing" them, lifting handfuls of water and pouring it over their heads.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER (CONT'D)
I WASH YOU WITH WATER. BUT, THERE'S ONE COMING WHO'LL WASH YOU WITH GOD'S SPIRIT AND WITH FIRE FROM HEAVEN. HE'S SO MUCH GREATER THAN I AM THAT I'M NOT WORTHY TO UNTIE HIS SANDALS.

Suddenly, John looks up. Standing on the river bank is a powerful man of thirty years old. He has kind, but deeply piercing eyes. This is JESUS. He smiles at John, then walks down into the water to be baptized. John stares at him in awe.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER (CONT'D)
You come to me for this? I should come to you.

JESUS
Let it be done in obedience to God's word.

John baptizes Jesus. As soon as he's finished a brilliant shaft of light falls on them from the clouds. In it is a glistening, winged form like a dove. A whispering voice fills the air.

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)
This is my Son, whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.

The crowd looks confused. Zach turns to the man beside him.

ZACH
Did you hear something?

MAN IN CROWD
I think it was the wind.

Jesus walks up out of the water on the other side of the Jordan...and vanishes into the crowd.

EXT. WILDERNESS OF THE NEGEV -- DAY

A blistering sun beats down. A hot wind blows. Jesus walks alone through a twisted canyon. The rock formations appear foreboding and sinister. This is an arid place filled with dark spirits. He passes a huge boulder. For an instant, an evil, ghostly face rises to the surface and stares at Him, malevolently. Soft, hissing voices whisper in the air.

WIND VOICES
(over and over)
What is He doing here? Why has He come? What does He want?

Jesus sits down in the blistering heat. Dust blows around Him.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE OF DAYS:

Black clouds swirl in the sky. Jesus is kneeling in prayer. A storm rages, soaking him to the skin. Time itself becomes twisted. Dawns and sunsets crash like waves. Night and day. Light and dark. Alone and hungry, Jesus walks through the wilderness.

MONTAGE ENDS

The desert sun is beating down. Weak and exhausted, He leans against a rock. Suddenly, a soft, musical voice calls His name.

LUCIFER (O.S.)
Jesus. Holy Jeeesus. Is that really you? The Son of God, squatting like a beggar in the dirt?

Jesus opens his eyes. Standing on a cliff above Him is a glorious figure surrounded with golden mist. It's Lucifer, as he appeared long ago, covered with rainbows, his hair glistening with stars.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
(with incredible charm)
You've been here forty days without any food. I'm worried about you. You're getting awfully thin.

Though He's weak, Jesus rises to meet him. The Great Angel descends to a giant boulder above His head.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
And all this time you've been waiting for me. I'm flattered. But I've been busy. There's so much to do in my world.

Lucifer sits down comfortably and stares at Him.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
So, you really do believe that you're the Son of God. Isn't that a little arrogant? Pride can do terrible things to a person.
(MORE)

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
Believe me, I know.
(beat)
Look, there's no reason for us to be enemies. If our power was joined we could make the world into a lovely garden. Wasn't that the original plan? And look what these ugly humans have done to it. Well, we can change it back. Of course, I need to be absolutely certain that you do have power.
(smiling amiably)
There are so many liars in the world.

He picks up a stone.

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
Just a little test. I know you're desperately hungry. So am I. So, let's eat. If you're really the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread and we'll share a meal together.

Quietly, Jesus replies:

JESUS
Like you 'shared a meal' with Adam and Eve? It's written, 'people do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the Mouth of God.'

Lucifer smiles.

LUCIFER
Do we have to get so 'spiritual' about everything? Personally, I believe in common sense. But I can play your game.

He sweeps his hand outward. Jesus is caught up in a whirlwind.

EXT. PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE -- DAY

Jesus finds himself standing at a dizzying height on the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem. Lucifer is with him. Down below thousands of people are moving through the courtyard toward the entrance.

LUCIFER
Hope you're not afraid of heights.
(beat;pointing below)
Look down there. This is your moment, Jesus.
(MORE)

LUCIFER (CONT'D)
Show the Jews that you're their king messiah. All it'll take is one small miracle and they'll follow you anywhere. Just throw yourself to the ground. God won't let you die. It's written in the Scriptures, He'll command His angels so that you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.

Jesus stares at him.

JESUS
It's also written, 'don't put the Lord your God to the test.'

Lucifer isn't smiling now. Once more he sweep his hand toward Jesus. Once more they are caught up in a whirlwind.

EXT. TALLEST MOUNTAIN ON EARTH -- DAY

This time Jesus is standing at the top of the tallest mountain in the world. Spread out beneath Him is an incredible sight, all the lights of all the cities of the world, through all of time -- everything from the marble buildings of ancient Rome to the far distant towers of Manhattan, stand dimly in the mist.

LUCIFER
Isn't it beautiful? All the cities that will ever be, filled with billions of people. And they're mine. I'm the King of this world. You've come to save the human race. Well I'll make it easy for you. You can be a god -- their god -- without any trouble or suffering or pain. The world is yours. I'll give it to you. Just perform one simple act.
(beat)
Bow down and worship me.

As Jesus stares at him, the words that leave his lips are like lightning. And His voice is from the Mountain in the stars.

JESUS
IT IS WRITTEN, 'WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.' GET AWAY FROM ME SATAN.

The words are like thunder. The lights of the cities vanish. Satan shrieks in terror. In an instant, he changes from a creature of beauty into the horrifying serpent. Once more there is a whirlwind of dust.

EXT. WILDERNESS OF THE NEGEV -- DAY

When the dust storm is gone, Jesus is standing alone in the desert gorge.

EXT. RIVER JORDAN -- DAY

At the river Jordan, John is preaching to the people. Zach is still spying, taking notes on a piece of parchment. This time he's "disguised" as a scribe with a neatly coiffured wig.

JOHN THE BAPTIZER
THE DAYS ARE SHORT. GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL COME LIKE A WHIRLWIND. ARE YOU READY TO MEET HIM? DON'T MISS OUT ON HIS KINGDOM.

Suddenly, John looks up. Standing on a hill watching him is Jesus. He cries out:

JOHN THE BAPTIZER (CONT'D)
THERE HE IS. THAT'S THE LAMB OF GOD, THE SPECIAL SACRIFICE THAT WILL TAKE AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD. FOLLOW HIM.

Jesus turns away. Several young men near John look at each other, then, hurry after Him. One of them is ANDREW. On impulse, Zach stuffs the parchment into his tunic and follows them.

EXT. CANA OF GALILEE -- NIGHT

In the small town of Cana, many lamps and fires are burning. Joyful music is in the air. The town is in the middle of a huge party. It's a wedding celebration with food and wine and dancing. First the men dance, then, the women in the ancient, Jewish tradition. The BRIDE and GROOM lead the festivities. But suddenly, a SERVANT comes up to the groom and whispers to him.

SERVANT
There's no more wine. We're about to run out.

A look of shocked despair comes to the young man's face.

GROOM
That's impossible. I bought more than enough.

SERVANT
Well, it's almost gone.

GROOM
What am I going to do? I'll be disgraced.

Jesus joins the crowd. His small group of followers is with Him. Skulking at the rear is Zach. Jesus' mother Mary comes up to Him.

MARY
Son, all of their wine is gone. The bridegroom is in trouble.

Turning to her, He speaks gently.

JESUS
Mother, the time hasn't come yet to reveal myself.

Mary looks at Him, then turns to the servant who spoke to the groom.

MARY
Whatever He tells you -- do it.

Not far away are six, huge, water jugs. Jesus points to them.

JESUS
Those jars, are they empty?

SERVANT
Yes.

JESUS
Fill them with water.

The servant stares at him.

SERVANT
What?

MARY
Do it!

SERVANT
All right, if you say so.

Reluctantly, the man motions for other servants to come.

SERVANT (CONT'D)
(to the other servants)
Let's fill those jars with water.

They hurry to obey. When they're full, Jesus says to the servant:

JESUS
Now, take some to the master of the feast.

Still puzzled, the servant does what he's told. As Jesus watches, the man whispers something to the groom. The groom tastes the sample.

GROOM
(crying out)
THIS WINE IS WONDERFUL. Where did you get it?

The man points at Jesus. The groom hurries toward Him, but before he can get there, Jesus fades away into the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A TOWN IN GALILEE -- DAY

Jesus is walking down the main street of a town. His followers are behind Him. A huge crowd is watching. Among them is Zach, disguised as a priest. As Jesus walks, He preaches:

JESUS
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME. HE'S APPOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE'S SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKEN-HEARTED AND TO TELL PRISONERS THAT THEY'RE GOING TO BE RELEASED. THE BLIND WILL SEE, AND THE DOWN-TRODDEN WILL BE FREED FROM THEIR OPPRESSORS. GOD IS READY TO GIVE BLESSINGS TO ALL WHO COME TO HIM.

Suddenly, a man cries out:

BLIND MAN (O.S.)
JESUS, JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME.

Jesus walks over and moves through the crowd. At the back, against a wall, sits a filthy beggar. Jesus reaches down and takes the man's hand.

JESUS
(gently)
Friend, what can I do for you?

The blind man hangs onto Him desperately.

BLIND MAN
Please, Lord, more than anything, all my life I've wanted to see.

JESUS
My son, your sins are forgiven.

Standing close by is a group of priests. Zach is with them. The men stare at each other.

PRIEST #1
What did he just say?

PRIEST #2
He forgave that man's sins.

PRIEST #1
But only God can do that.

Jesus looks over at them.

JESUS
Which is easier, to forgive sins or make a blind man see? But so that you'll know the Power of God...

Turning back to the blind man, he places his fingers over the man's eyes and says:

JESUS (CONT'D)
Your prayer is answered. I command your sight to return.

Jesus removes his fingers. The man opens his eyes...and cries out in complete shock as though he's been struck by a bolt of lightning.

POV THE BEGGAR

As he looks up he sees brilliant light. In it is the Face of Jesus smiling down at him. He looks around. He jumps to his feet and begins yelling in absolute amazement.

BLIND MAN
I CAN SEE. I CAN SEE. I CAN SEE.

The priests are taken aback. The man continues screaming, bouncing all over the street, rushing up to people, staring in their faces and roaring with laughter.

BLIND MAN (CONT'D)
I SEE YOU. YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. AND I SEE YOU. YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL TOO.

He runs up to Zach who is amazed beyond words.

BLIND MAN (CONT'D)
EVEN YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. EVERYBODY'S BEAUTIFUL. PRAISE GOD. I CAN SEE. I CAN SEE.

The crowd cheers. Smiling, Jesus walks on. A priest steps up beside Him.

PRIEST #1
You say you're a teacher who's come from God. Well, here's a little test. What's the greatest of God's commandments?

JESUS
The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and strength and mind. And the second one is 'love your neighbor as yourself.' You're a priest. Have you ever broken one of these?

As the man stares at him, a strange look of guilt comes into his eyes. He falls back with his friends. Jesus continues walking. The huge crowd is right behind. The road leads down a hill.

In front of them is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus stops for a moment and smiles. The inland lake is breathtakingly beautiful in the morning light. Sun glistens on the waves. The deep blue water is speckled with the white sails of fishing boats. Followed by the crowd, Jesus walks down to the shore where fishermen are sorting their catch.

EXT. SHORE ON THE SEA OF GALILEE -- CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, a boat enters the shallows. Inside are three fishermen, SIMON, JAMES and JOHN. The biggest fisherman, Simon, jumps out and begins dragging the boat toward the land. Jesus watches. It's obvious the men aren't happy. Simon stops and stares at his friends.

SIMON
(to his two partners)
Hey, what is this? I'm the only one who's gonna get wet? Gimme a hand out here.

The other two jump into the water with him. When the boat gets close Jesus sees that it's empty. They don't have any fish.

JESUS
Where are your fish? You were fishing weren't you?

SIMON
(disgustedly)
Yeah, we were fishing. Out all night and you see what it got us?

JESUS
Do you really want to catch fish?

Simon stares at Jesus. The whole crowd is watching.

SIMON
That's the business I'm in. If I don't catch fish I don't eat.

JESUS
Well, go back out into the deep water and try again.

SIMON
(staring at him)
Look, "teacher," like I said, we fished all night. We're experts at this. Fishing's always bad this late in the morning.

Jesus says nothing. James looks at Simon.

JAMES
Come on, Simon, what have we got to lose?

Simon stares at Jesus.

SIMON
Oh, all right.

Jesus smiles as the three men push the boat back out and jump inside.

EXT. BOAT ON SEA OF GALILEE -- MOMENTS LATER

When they reach the deep water, Simon, James and John throw in their net. Instantly, it's full of glistening fish.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE
We've got fish.

They start to pull the net in but there are so many fish that the boat begins to swamp. Simon starts yelling to other boats.

SIMON
HEY, HEY, WE NEED HELP OVER HERE. COME AND HELP US.

The three men are up to their waists in fish. Fish are flopping all around them.

ON THE SHORE

Jesus and the crowd are watching. Jesus laughs.

JESUS
They said they wanted fish. They got fish.

The crowd laughs and cheers.

EXT. SHORE ON THE SEA OF GALILEE -- MOMENTS LATER

Once more the boat with Simon, James and John heads into shore. This time it's so full of fish the men can hardly move. Simon jumps out and walks over to Jesus. He kneels in front of Him.

JESUS
(singing)
You're Simon the fisherman. I must talk to you.

SIMON
(singing)
Are you Jesus the Son of God
Can that possibly be true?

JESUS
I am He
I have come
Come follow Me
There're greater things for you to do...

Jesus walks over to a net full of fish. Simon, James and John and the crowd follow Him.

JESUS (CONT'D)
The Kingdom of Heaven's like a net
Cast into the sea
Suddenly, it's filled with God's creations
Filled beyond capacity...

A smiling, little boy holds up an armful of fish. Jesus pats his head.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Rescuing souls who've strayed
Forgiving ones who've disobeyed...

He turns to look at the men.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Instead of being fishers of fish
You should be fishers of men
You'll see wonders never seen or heard
Have faith, be brave, come follow
Come follow My Word...

Jesus looks up at the sky. Above them beautiful clouds are forming.

JESUS (CONT'D)
The Kingdom of Heaven's like a cloud
Bursting in the sky
You know the wind and rain is coming
And the storm won't pass you by
As you see this earthly rhyme
Can't you see signs of the time...

He looks at Simon, James and John.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Instead of being fishers of fish
You should be fishers of men
Souls will be healed, hearts will be stirred
Have faith, be brave; come follow,
Come follow My Word...

Jesus starts to walk, but Simon is reluctant to follow.

SIMON
Following priests and prophets is not what life entails...

ALL THE FISHERMEN
(singing)
Our lives are nets and boats and seafaring, windy sails...

JESUS
Children of light
Light the dark
Children of light
Let spirit and truth be your mark...

Jesus begins pointing at fishermen and men in the crowd.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Matthew, Thomas, Simon, Andrew, James and John, son of Zebedee
Just take up your net, take up your staff
And come, come, follow Me...

But, the men hang back.

ALL THE FISHERMEN
We hear you enter the houses of sinners, forgiving each and every one...

JESUS
God's given me the power to forgive,
I'm His only begotten Son...

Jesus puts His arm around Simon and they begin walking.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Instead of being fishers of fish
You'll be fishers of men
You'll see wonders never seen or heard
Have faith, be brave; come follow
Come follow, come follow My Word

But there is still a questioning look on Peter's face. He's uncertain.

SIMON
But, Master, I have a wife and family to take care of.

JESUS
Your Father in Heaven
Looks down at your deeds
And He'll protect and watch over you
And all of your needs...

Then, He opens his arms to all of them.

JESUS (CONT'D)
So, love one another and follow the Lord
The Kingdom of Heaven will be your reward
Come, yes, come, and come, come follow Me
Come follow Me...

The men begin following Jesus.

THE FISHERMEN
Instead of being fishers of fish
We will be fishers of men
We'll see wonders never seen or heard
We're brave, with faith we'll follow
We'll follow your Word.

As Jesus leads them away, Zach is watching in awe.

EXT. RIVER JORDAN -- EVENING

A giant crowd is gathered on the banks of the river Jordan. Among them are hundreds of sick people who've been brought by their loved ones. Jesus is touching them, healing them. His followers are with Him. Not far away is a group of angry priests. Zach is in the shadows behind them. Suddenly, a group of mothers and children push forward to see Jesus. The disciples try to hold them back.

MATTHEW
Wait a minute. Everybody stay back. We can't have a lot of kids up here.

The mothers and children look deeply disappointed. But Jesus calls out:

JESUS
Let them come. Don't keep them away. The Kingdom of Heaven is made up of little ones just like these.

He takes a little boy in his arms and turns to the crowd.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Unless you're willing to believe in Me and have faith like this little child you'll never see my Father's Kingdom.

Suddenly, in front of Him is placed a crippled child on a litter. It's a little girl of six years old. This is ESTHER. Her arms and legs are so badly deformed that she can hardly move. Her mother is with her.

MOTHER
(in tears)
Please, Master, my little girl suffers so much. I know you can heal her.

Giving the little boy back to his mother, Jesus turns to the crippled child.

JESUS
What's your name.

ESTHER
Esther.

Jesus stroke her hair.

JESUS
You have the name of a great queen.
(beat)
Esther, do you know what sin is?

ESTHER
(nodding)
Disobeying what God says -- doing things that break His commandments.

Jesus looks deep into her eyes.

JESUS
Have you done things like that?

ESTHER
(dropping her eyes)
Sometimes I hate people. I hate them so much I want to hurt them.

JESUS
You're right. Hatred is sin. Do you want your sins forgiven?

ESTHER
Yes, I don't want to hate anymore.

JESUS
Then, I forgive you. Your sins are gone.

As usual, the priests are scandalized.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Esther, you've been healed on the inside. Now, I'm going to heal you on the outside.

Jesus touches the little girl's twisted arms and legs. Instantly, they straighten out. Muscles form.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Get up and walk.

With a look of utter joy, Esther gets up, yelling.

ESTHER
MOMMY, MOMMY. LOOK AT ME.

Laughing out loud, she begins spinning.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
I CAN WALK. I CAN SPIN.

Jesus smiles. Esther's mother is sobbing for joy. She kneels at Jesus' feet and takes his hand. She's crying so hard that she can't even speak. Gently, He lifts her up.

JESUS
Your faith has healed your daughter. Go in peace.

As Jesus continues walking, a voice in the crowd cries out:

VOICE
Teacher, you're close to God. Tell us what He's like.

JESUS
Do you really want to know what God is like? When you've seen Me you've seen Him. The Father and I are One.

One of the priests yells out:

PRIEST #2
Are you saying that you're God? That's blasphemy.

Jesus looks over at him.

JESUS
I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, but by Me. God loves the world so much that He gave His only Son. Anyone who believes in Him will not die in his sins, but have eternal life.

Zach listens and watches with wide eyes.

EXT. CASTLE OF HEROD ANTIPAS -- NIGHT

Mist swirls around the evil-looking castle of Herod Antipas. Torchlight gleams through the windows.

INT. THRONE ROOM OF HEROD ANTIPAS -- NIGHT

Herod Antipas and Herodias are seated on their thrones arguing. Nearby a fire is burns in a huge fireplace. In the tongues of flame is the shifting image of a serpent. Its eyes watch them.

HERODIAS
Why don't you just go ahead and kill him. Why do you wait? As long as that man's alive, he's a danger to us.

HEROD ANTIPAS
I told you, the people think he's a prophet. Killing prophets is bad luck.

HERODIAS
You're lying. You're afraid of him.

HEROD ANTIPAS
QUIET WOMAN.

At that moment, Zach enters escorted by a guard. He falls prostrate before the king.

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
(hissing at him)
Well, spy, where have you been? John the Baptizer is in my dungeon. And we've been searching for you EVERYWHERE.

HERODIAS
(sweetly)
Your answer had better be good...or you'll be dead.

ZACH
(with a queasy look; singing)
Herod, in the matter of the man called Jesus, I thought that I should go and spy.

Herod grabs Zach and drags him up until they're nose to nose.

HEROD ANTIPAS
DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE FOUND ANOTHER PROPHET!
(singing)
I hope the word you speak will not displease us.

ZACH
(petrified)
So do I, so do I, so do I...

Herod tosses him to a huge guard with a spear. The guard catches Zach's clothes on his spear point. And there he hangs.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Now, majesty, I live to serve you
As I tell you of the sights I've seen

Zach's tunic rips and he falls in a heap on the floor.

ZACH (CONT'D)
So, I pray it won't anger or unnerve you
When I speak of Jesus Christ the Nazarene
Maybe He's just a prophet, I hope it's just a fad
The news could be described as 'good and bad.'"

Two guards stand over Zach jabbing their spears into his rear end...which he's trying to keep covered since his tunic ripped. Herod bends over him.

HEROD ANTIPAS
Tell me then, chief spy. Pleasure your king with your knowledge.

ZACH
My lord, please tell the masses of muscles to put down their spears.

Herod waves his hand and the guards withdraw.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Eternal thanks, my king.

HEROD ANTIPAS
Now speak or you will have eternal pain.

ZACH
The good news is the poison I put in the water
I thought would work just fine
But the bad new is
Jesus waved His hand and the water turned to wine.

Herod stares at him as though he's insane. Zach sees the look and begins slowly inching backward.

ZACH (CONT'D)
There's more good news
He rules as King
In a Kingdom in the sky that's His
The bad news, well, the people, they think he is...the Greatest King.

Herod's eyes grow wide.

HEROD ANTIPAS
THE GREATEST KING?

The guards move toward Zach with their spears. The points glisten near his neck.

ZACH
They're pointing them at me again, my Lord.

HEROD ANTIPAS
(growing more enraged)
Guards prepare to skewer and barbecue

The guards lift Zach on their spear points and carry him toward the fireplace.

ZACH
NO, no, no, wait! Being killed ruins my memory. It'll get better, I guarantee.

Herod nods and they drop him -- but very close to the flames. The face of the Serpent appears in the fire. Its mouth opens to bite him. Without seeing it, just in time, he jumps away.

HEROD ANTIPAS
PROCEED!

ZACH
The good news is
Your army's good at fighting, Sire
No real chance has he
The bad news is
They say it's exciting
When he makes blind men see

Zach leaps up onto a carved fountain and tiptoes around the edge.

ZACH (CONT'D)
And you'll love this
They say He can walk on water with no regrets
The good news is
He heals by a river
The bad news is
He really can deliver

He almost falls into the water, but at the last second he tips the other way and lands on the floor.

ZACH (CONT'D)
And the worst news is
That's as bad as the good news gets

Get on His right side, Sire
It couldn't hurt
He looks on the bright side
And even believes that you'll convert...

Herod roars over to him.

HEROD ANTIPAS
WHAT? CONVERT? VIVISECT HIM!

The guards move to obey. As they stab their spears, Zach jumps and dodges.

ZACH
No, please, your minus...uh...I mean, your highness, don't vivi..vivi...whatever you said.

HEROD ANTIPAS
Chief spy, you thin my patience
I sent you on a mission to uncover
Ways to destroy that upstart shepherd
Now what is this say you?

ZACH
Okay, okay, I've saved the best for last.

HEROD ANTIPAS
Continue, but at your peril.

The guards pull back a few inches. Zach is sweating.

ZACH
You guys are a tough crowd. I mean,
the last time I played the palace...

HEROD ANTIPAS
CHIEF SPY...

ZACH
The bad news is
Your power will not thrill Him
But you need not rant and rave
The good news is
It's easy just to kill Him
But news is they tell me that you
can't

HEROD ANTIPAS
And why not?

ZACH
Cause He'll rise up to His heavenly
Father
And miracles are what they do
The good news is
He treats me like a brother
And the good news is
He says to love each other
But the bad news is
He knows about your 'point' of view

On the word "point" Zach touches the tip of a nearby spear.

ZACH (CONT'D)
So, the good news is...

HEROD ANTIPAS
I don't want good news, do I?

ZACH
All right, the bad news is...

HEROD ANTIPAS
That's better.

ZACH
The bad news is
They say the good news is
Not going to be good for you.

HEROD ANTIPAS
SKEWER HIM!

Spears are thrown as Zach sings the last, long note. Unintentionally, they stick in the wall forming a "spear-case" up which Zach climbs escaping the pursuing guards. Before he can get out of room, Herodias catches him. Her eyes are the eyes of the Serpent.

HERODIAS
I've heard of this miracle worker, Jesus. All the people are talking about him.

The exhausted little man pulls a sheaf of parchment from his clothes.

ZACH
I've been following His every move, your highness. Everything He does-- I write it down. Here. See?

He shoves the papers to Herodias who stares at them.

HERODIAS
Let him keep following this Jesus. I want to know more.

ZACH
You'll know every time He sneezes. You'll know His every wheeze.

HEROD ANTIPAS
ALL RIGHT. YOU TALK TO MUCH. GET TO WORK.

Herod boots him from the room.

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- NIGHT

Jesus and his followers are seated around a camp fire. There are eleven men. The women disciples are nearby. These include JOHANNA, A wealthy woman who helps pay expenses and other, younger women like ANNA, Peter's wife and RACHEL, the mother of James and John. Quietly, Jesus talks to them all.

JESUS
I've chosen each one of you to be servants of my Kingdom. But, you twelve men will be my special messengers to the world. You'll tell people everywhere what you see and hear.

He looks at each man as He says his name.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Simon, Andrew, James and John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew,
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon, the Zealot, and Judas, the son of James.

Simon has been counting.

SIMON
But, Master, that's only eleven.

Suddenly, a figure walks out of the darkness into the firelight. He bows before Jesus. This is JUDAS ISCARIOT.

JUDAS
Teacher, I've been watching you. My name is Judas Iscariot. If you're looking for a twelfth man, I volunteer. I have many skills. I'm good at handling money.

Jesus looks at him long and hard...then...

JESUS
Welcome, Judas. There's a special place for you. I've been waiting for you to come.

Smiling, Judas sits down with the other disciples. Jesus continues staring at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- MORNING

The disciples awaken. The camp fire has gone out. John looks down the hillside. To his amazement, thousands of people are gathering. He awakens Jesus.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE
Master, the crowds have found us.

Slowly, Jesus gets up and looks out at the people.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE (CONT'D)
They must have traveled half the night to get here.

JESUS
They're like sheep without a shepherd.
(beat)
Wake the others.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- LATER

The sun is getting low in the sky. Jesus is walking among the people teaching them. Zach is in the crowd close to Jesus. This time he's disguised as a shepherd with a short, crooked staff.

JESUS
Everyone in the world wants to be happy and blessed. Do you want to know what God says about it?
(beat)
You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you, there is more of God and His rule.

As Jesus walks along he passes a very poor man. He smiles at him. The man smiles back. Though he is poor, there is joy in his eyes.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when you feel you have lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

Jesus turns and looks straight into Zach's eyes. Zach stares up at him, but he can't quite hold his gaze.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when you're content with just who you are--no more no less. That's the moment you find yourself the proud owner of everything that can't be bought.

He sees a little boy with a basket with a few pieces of bread and fish in it.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

Jesus sees a young woman who's taking care of a very old woman.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full' you find yourselves cared for.
(beat)
You're blessed when you get your inside world--your heart and mind--put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

He walks up to a soldier in the crowd.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

He looks out over the multitude.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.
(beat)
You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.
(The Message Bible)

Jesus turns and walks back to the top of the hill. The people begin to talk among themselves about what they've heard. Matthew comes to Jesus.

MATTHEW
Master, the people are hungry and it's getting late. Send them away to the villages so they can buy food.

JESUS
They don't need to go anywhere. You give them something to eat.

Matthew stares at Him in amazement. Suddenly, the little boy with the basket of food walks up and tugs at Matthew's cloak. He turns.

LITTLE BOY
Jesus can have my lunch.

Jesus smiles at him.

JESUS
Thank you.

The little boy smiles and runs off. Matthew takes the basket and stares at it.

MATTHEW
(glumly)
Some bread and a little bit of fish.
What good is this?
(staring out the crowd)
There must be five thousand men here
not including women and children.

JESUS
Give it to me and get the disciples.

Matthew hands him the basket. Jesus turns to the crowd.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I want all of you to sit down and
pray with me.

The crowd obeys. Taking the bread and fish, He holds them up to Heaven.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Thank you, Father, for food from the
earth. Bread from fields of wheat
and fish from Your mighty waters.
All good things come from Your Hand.

Then, He starts breaking the food into pieces and handing to his men and women followers to distribute. As He breaks the pieces the food multiplies in His hands. The crowd is amazed.

OLD MAN
What's he doing? Where's the food
coming from?

OLD WOMAN
I don't know, but there's more and
more of it.

The disciples begin handing it out. All the thousands are being fed. As Jesus feeds them, He is filled with joy. He cries out.

JESUS
PEOPLE OF THE WORLD WORRY ABOUT
EVERYTHING. WHERE THEY WILL LIVE,
WHAT THEY WILL EAT, WHAT THEY WILL
WEAR. BUT I TELL YOU IN THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN THERE'S NO PLACE FOR WORRY.
DON'T YOU SEE HOW GOD CAN SUPPLY
YOUR NEEDS? THE WHOLE WORLD BELONGS
TO HIM. SO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT
YOU'RE GOING TO EAT OR DRINK OR WEAR.
SEARCH FIRST FOR THE KINGDOM OF MY
FATHER AND HIS HOLY WAY OF LIVING,
AND EVERYTHING YOU NEED WILL BE GIVEN
TO YOU.

There's more than enough food for everyone. As Zach stuffs himself with fish he mumbles:

ZACH
The good bad news gets worse and better. But how am I gonna explain this to the king?

As the people eat, Jesus walks among them.

JESUS
Do you want to know what your Heavenly Father is like? Listen to this story. Once there was a wealthy man who had two sons. The younger one was rebellious and never stopped getting into trouble. One day he came to his father...

INTERCUT scenes from the story.

INT. A JEWISH HOME -- DAY

A handsome teenage boy (THE PRODIGAL SON) walks up to his father who is sitting at a table writing on a parchment.

PRODIGAL SON
Look, I'm sick of arguing with you all the time. You don't have any right to judge the way I live. And you're never gonna change my mind about anything. When you die, I get half your money. So, why don't you give it to me now and I'll just leave.

As the father looks up at him, there are tears in his eyes.

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- CONTINUOUS

JESUS
With great sadness, the father gave the young man his part of the inheritance. He took it and went to a far country where he wasted it on drinking and prostitutes.

INT. INN -- NIGHT

Raucous music is playing. The young man is drunk and surrounded with beautiful women. While one of them entices him, another steals his purse.

JESUS (V.O.)
But soon, his wealth was gone. A famine came to that country and he had nothing to eat.

EXT. PIG FARM -- DAY

The young man, now dressed in rags, and starving walks toward a filthy pig farm.

JESUS (V.O.)
He took a job with a farmer feeding husks to pigs.

EXT. PIG STY -- DAY

Covered with mud, the young man feeds the hogs.

JESUS (V.O.)
After awhile, he was so hungry that he wished he could eat what the pigs were eating.

Tears run down the young man's filthy cheeks.

PRODIGAL SON
(to himself)
My father's servants live better than this. At least they have food and clothes. I'll go home and say to him, 'I've sinned against you and I don't have any right to be called your son. Let me be one of your servants. I'll work in your house for food.'

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- CONTINUOUS

JESUS
So, he started home. But, do you know what happened? All this time his father had been waiting for him to come back...watching for him every day.

EXT. A JEWISH HOME -- DAY

The father stands out in front of his home, looking off toward the horizon.

JESUS (V.O.)
Finally, he saw him a long way off.

As the old man stares, suddenly, his eyes are filled with joy. In the distance, he sees his son coming down the road. With a cry, he runs toward him.

JESUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He ran and threw his arms around him.

The father hugs his filthy son. Both of them are crying.

JESUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The young man asked to be forgiven and wanted to become one of his father's servants. Instead, his dad gave him a beautiful robe and threw a party.

INT. A JEWISH HOME -- DAY

In the home, there is singing and dancing. Wearing a beautiful robe, the son stands with his father. He's clean and smiling. All of the anger and rebellion are gone. As he looks at his son, the father's face is filled with love.

JESUS (V.O.)
He told everyone, 'My son who was dead to me is alive. He's returned and I'm so happy.'

EXT. A HILL IN GALILEE -- CONTINUOUS

As Jesus walks through the crowd, people have tears in their eyes.

JESUS
That's what your Father in Heaven is like. That's the way He loves you and waits for you to come to Him. He's calling to you right now.

Jesus begins singing:

JESUS (CONT'D)
When you're blinded by the winds of dust
Come to me, come to me any time
When friends have betrayed your solemn trust
Come to me, come to me any time

Jesus puts his arm around a teenage boy who is crying.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Bridled and blown by the winds of the world
Abandoned, bruised and tossed
Defiled and thrown, in a storm you were hurled
Now naked and lonely and lost

He takes the hand of lonely teenage girl in both of his and smiles down at her.

JESUS (CONT'D)
When you need a rescue, I'll be your hiding place
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
Come to me, come to me any time
When your dream's been shattered,
I'll be your saving grace
Come to me, come to me any time

He opens his arms to the multitude.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You'll find my arms open when you return
I won't give up on you
I'd exchange my life for you to learn
No matter what you've been through

Surrender you heart filled with scars of sorrow
Come to me, come to me any time
Not just for a day, but for every tomorrow
Come to me, come to me any time

The crowd is deeply moved.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I am here, come to me
I am here, here for you, come to me
Come to me, come to me any time.

As Jesus finishes, a messenger comes running up to Him. Zach is close by.

MESSENGER
Teacher, I need to talk to you.

Jesus turns toward him.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)
I have bad news. John, the Baptizer has been killed. Herod cut off his head.

Zach looks stunned. Tears well in Jesus' eyes.

JESUS
(quietly)
John has gone home to my Father's Kingdom. Of all the men who've ever been born there was never a prophet like him.

His disciples have gathered.

JESUS (CONT'D)
(to his disciples)
I need time alone to pray.
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
Go across the lake. I'll meet you on the other side.

Jesus walks away.

EXT. A FISHING BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE -- NIGHT

A storm is raging. Lightning and thunder crash. The waves are huge. The disciples are in a boat pulling hard on the oars. They're terrified. Water roars over them, drenching them to the skin. Simon yells out:

SIMON
PULL HARDER OR WE'RE NOT GONNA MAKE IT.
(beat)
OH, GOD, HELP US.

Suddenly, one of the disciples points.

JAMES
LOOK OVER THERE.

In the distance, walking on the water is an eerie, glowing figure. It looks like a ghost and it's coming toward them.

ANDREW
IT'S A GHOST. WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.

Simon stares.

SIMON
THAT'S NOT A GHOST.

Then, they hear Jesus' voice calling:

JESUS
DON'T BE AFRAID. IT IS I.

SIMON
(yelling)
LORD, IF IT'S REALLY YOU, TELL ME TO COME OUT ON THE WATER.

JESUS
COME.

Simon steps out of the boat. To his amazement, he finds himself walking on the waves. He laughs and shouts:

SIMON
HEY, LOOK AT THIS. I'M WALKING ON WATER.

But, then, a strange, queasy look comes to his face. The waves are gigantic. Though he's walking on the water, he's moving up and down with it.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What am I doing? AM I CRAZY? PEOPLE CAN'T WALK ON WATER.

Instantly, he starts to sink.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(screaming)
MASTER, SAVE ME!

Jesus is right above him. He takes his hand and pulls him up.

JESUS
Where's your faith? Why did you start doubting?

Together, they climb back into the boat. Jesus raises his hands to the storm.

JESUS (CONT'D)
PEACE, BE STILL.

Instantly, the storm dies to a dead calm. A full moon peeks out from the clouds. The disciples stare at him in awe.

MATTHEW
Surely, you are the Son of God.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE VILLAGE OF BETHANY -- DAY

A man staggers along a dusty road heading toward a nearby village. His face is pale. He's covered with sweat and is very ill. This is LAZARUS.

EXT. HOME IN BETHANY -- LATER

Lazarus collapses in the open door to his home. His two sisters, MARY and MARTHA OF BETHANY rush out to him.

MARTHA OF BETHANY
LAZARUS, what's wrong.

LAZARUS
Very sick. Terrible pain.

They help him into the house...

INT. LAZARUS' BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

...and to his bed.

MARY OF BETHANY
We've got to get a doctor.

LAZARUS
Won't help. I'm...dying.

MARTHA OF BETHANY
(in tears)
Oh, dear Lord...

LAZARUS
Get Jesus.

MARTHA OF BETHANY
But, He's all the way up in Galilee. That's three days journey.

MARY OF BETHANY
We'll send for Him anyway. Lazarus is His friend. He'll come.

Mary rushes from the room.

EXT. FOREST PATH NEAR MT. HERMON -- DAY

Jesus and His men and women disciples stand at the foot of the tallest mountain is Israel. He turns to His closest friends, Simon, James and John and says:

JESUS
The three of you walk with me for a little while. The rest wait here.

The four begin to walk up a path toward the steep slope.

EXT. NEAR SUMMIT OF MT. HERMON -- LATER

Jesus, Simon, James and John are high up the mountain path almost at the summit. Jesus is walking ahead. Suddenly, the disciples hear strange and wonderful singing. At first, it's like a whisper on the wind.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE
You hear something?

JAMES
Yeah. It's singing.
(beat)
Where's it coming from?

They look up. It's the middle of the day, but the sun has grown dim. They can see stars. The top of the mountain is covered with mist. As Jesus walks in front of them, He begins to change. His face shines like the sun and His clothes become as white as light. The disciples are like men in a dream. The singing is louder. It's the voices of angels.

When they reach the top two shimmering figures appear walking toward Jesus. One carries a scroll, the other stone tablets. The man with the scroll is ELIJAH and the man with the tablets is MOSES. In awe, James whispers:

JAMES (CONT'D)
The scroll of a prophet and the stone tablets of the Law. Could they be Elijah and Moses?

The shimmering figures speak to Jesus:

ELIJAH
Lord, the time that we prophets foretold is almost here.

MOSES
Greatest King, are you ready to lay down your life as a sacrifice to pay the penalty for God's broken laws?

JESUS
(quietly)
I am.

Suddenly, Simon bumbles up to Jesus and blurts out.

SIMON
(his eyes dazzled)
Lord, it's great to be here. I've got an idea. Why don't we put up three little shrines--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah?

Instantly, a glistening cloud filled with lightning swirls around them. Moses and Elijah vanish away. The disciples fall face down on the ground. A deep Voice from the heart of the universe rumbles like thunder.

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)
THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE. LISTEN ONLY TO HIM.

As they lie trembling with their faces in the dirt, suddenly, the disciples hear Jesus' quiet voice.

JESUS
Get up. Don't be afraid.

They raise their heads. The cloud is gone and they are alone with Him. Jesus looks completely normal. Slowly, they rise to their feet.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Don't tell anyone what you've seen until I've been raised from the dead.
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
Come, let's go back down. Our friends are waiting.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH GALILEE -- DAY

A young man runs along a road in Galilee. This is MARK. Out of breath, he stops a group of travelers.

MARK
I'm looking for Jesus, the teacher. Have you seen Him?

TRAVELER
We passed him yesterday morning. He was going toward Mount Hermon.

The man points toward the mountain in the distance.

MARK
Thanks.

The young man runs on.

EXT. DARK, FORBIDDING FOREST -- DAY

Jesus walks ahead of His men and women followers. They are moving through an eerie forest. Huge vines choke the trees. Zach, "camouflaged" with branches and weeds is stumbling along, trying to keep out of sight. Storm clouds are rising in the sky. Thunder rumbles. Suddenly, a huge, slithering shadow becomes visible. It crawls through the vines, keeping pace with the group. Abruptly, Jesus turns toward them. His eyes are piercing.

JESUS
TELL ME, WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?

MATTHEW
Some say, John the Baptizer come back to life.

JOHANNA, one of the women followers speaks up.

JOHANNA
A lot of people think you're one of the ancient prophets like Elijah or Jeremiah.

JESUS
But who do you say that I am?

Simon is walking with his wife.

SIMON
(boldly)
You're the Messiah, the King, the Son of the Living God.

JESUS
Simon, my Father in Heaven has revealed this to you. From this moment, I change your name to Peter, the stone. On this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell won't stand against it.

There is a crash of thunder. Not far away, where only Jesus can see, the huge, black shadow of the serpent slides toward them through the vegetation. Jesus grows very solemn.

JESUS (CONT'D)
We're going to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. Terrible things will happen to me there. I'm going to be tortured and killed. But, on the third day, I'll rise again.

Simon Peter stares at Jesus. Behind Peter, unseen by any of them except Jesus rises the shadow of the giant Serpent, the Dark Angel Satan. The shadow whispers in Peter's ear. Peter blurts out:

SIMON PETER
Never, Lord. Terrible things like that won't ever happen to you.

Jesus stares through Peter toward the shadowy monster behind him.

JESUS
GET AWAY FROM ME, SATAN. YOU CARE NOTHING ABOUT GOD'S PLANS.

With a look of rage, the serpent vanishes like smoke. Peter is dumfounded. It begins to rain.

EXT. MAIN ROAD IN GALILEE -- DAY

The rain is falling harder. Jesus and His followers are walking down a main road. Suddenly, the young man Mark runs up to them.

MARK
(out of breath)
Jesus, Master, I've been looking for you everywhere.

Jesus puts his hand on his shoulder.

JESUS
Mark, what's wrong?

MARK
Mary and Martha sent me. Lazarus is sick and dying. They beg you to come.

JESUS
(calmly)
Go back and tell them I'll get there as soon as I can.

MARK
Yes, Master.

The young man begins running back the way he came. Jesus continues walking at the same pace through the rain.

EXT. JERUSALEM -- NIGHT

Moonlight shines down on the beautiful, white city of Jerusalem. In the Temple, torches are burning.

INT. COURT OF THE CHIEF PRIEST -- NIGHT

A group of priests is having a secret meeting. Seated in a raised chair in all of his robes is the Chief Priest. Above them, unseen in the shadows around the ceiling, is the vague, smoky form of the Great Serpent. Its evil eyes stare down.

PRIEST #1
I tell you, he's a trouble-maker. It was bad enough when he stayed in Galilee. But now, he's on his way to Jerusalem. The fanatics think he's the Messiah. If violence breaks out the Romans will take it out on us.

CHIEF PRIEST
How do you know he's coming here?

PRIEST #2
Herod has a spy who follows him every day. Our spies have talked to him.

CHIEF PRIEST
Well, what are we going to do about this? We can't let this ridiculous carpenter endanger our position with the Romans.

PRIEST #3
Whatever we do, we've got to be careful.
(MORE)

PRIEST #3 (CONT'D)
Crowds follow him everywhere. And there'll be even more people here for the Passover.

PRIEST #1
Right in the middle of our feast he'll probably start forgiving sins.

CHIEF PRIEST
THIS BLASPHEMY MUST STOP!

A SCRIBE speaks up.

SCRIBE
One of his followers is a man named Judas. I know him. All he cares about is money. He was fired as a book keeper for stealing. I'm sure the only reason he's with this fanatic is to get rich.

CHIEF PRIEST
Well, if it's money he wants, talk to him. If he helps us, we'll make it worth his while.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM -- MORNING

Jesus and His followers are coming closer to Jerusalem. The crowds with Him are growing large. As he walks along, suddenly, a woman in black, mourning robes rushes up and kneels before Him. It's Martha and she's sobbing.

MARTHA OF BETHANY
Lord, you've taken so long to get here. My brother Lazarus is dead. If you'd been here, you could've healed him.

JESUS
(gently)
Martha, listen to Me. I am the Resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if he dies. And whoever lives and puts his faith in Me will never die.
(beat)
Do you believe this?

MARTHA OF BETHANY
(without much hope)
Yes, Lord, whatever you say. You're the Messiah, the Son of God.

JESUS
Get your sister Mary and meet me at the tomb.

EXT. PLACE OF THE TOMBS -- LATER

Followed by a large crowd, Jesus enters a desolate valley filled with tomb-caves carved into the rocks. Martha and Mary join him. Both are sobbing.

JESUS
(with a heavy heart)
Where have you laid him?

MARY
(pointing)
Over here.

They show him a tomb with a large stone rolled over the entrance. Jesus stands in front of it. Tears stream down his cheeks.

JESUS
Have them take away the stone.

MARY
But, Master, he's been buried four days. There'll be a terrible odor.

JESUS
Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?

Simon Peter and some of the disciples roll the stone away revealing the dark entrance to a cavern. Jesus looks up to Heaven and begins to pray.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Father, I thank You that You have heard me. You always hear me.

Then, He calls out in a loud voice:

JESUS (CONT'D)
LAZARUS...COME OUT!

INT. BURIAL CAVE -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the dark cave, the dead body of Lazarus lies wrapped in grave clothes. His face is not visible. Suddenly, there is the whispering song of angels. In the center of his chest appears a pinpoint of brilliant light. The singing grows louder. Slowly, the light fills his entire body. Then, it fades away. For a moment, he lies as motionless as before. Then...he moves.

EXT. BURIAL CAVE -- MOMENTS LATER

Outside the cave, the people wait, breathlessly. Zach is among them, staring at the entrance to the tomb. Then, in the darkness there appears a white form...slowly walking toward them. The crowd is terrified. The figure comes to the entrance and stops.

JESUS
Unbind him.

With wide, fearful eyes, Mary and Martha walk up to their brother. With trembling hands, they begin to pull the bindings away from his head. Suddenly, his face becomes visible. Lazarus is totally healthy. He looks at them and laughs joyfully. The crowd goes wild. The joy of his sisters knows no bounds. Sobbing, they hug and kiss him. Jesus is laughing too. Zach isn't laughing. He's completely blown away.

EXT. MAIN GATE OF JERUSALEM -- DAY

A huge crowd is gathered. They're waving palm branches and crying out:

VOICES IN THE CROWD
HAIL! HAIL TO THE MESSIAH. HAIL TO OUR KING. BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Jesus is riding through the crowd on a donkey, down a pathway of palm branches. Several of the priests stand on a wall watching everything. With angry looks, they turn away.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE -- DAY

The cheering crowd is still following as Jesus walks up toward the main entrance to the Temple.

EXT. TEMPLE OUTER COURT -- MOMENTS LATER

The outer court of the temple has been turned into a cattle market. People are haggling over the prices of calves, lambs and doves to be used for sacrifices. In silence, Jesus enters and stands watching. As he watches, he plaits a whip out of several cords. Suddenly, he cries out:

JESUS
IT IS WRITTEN, MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER. BUT, YOU HAVE MADE IT INTO A DEN OF THIEVES.

Rushing into the courtyard, He turns over the tables of the money changers. He releases the animals and drives them out. In a few moments, everything turns to chaos. The people cheer. But, the priests who are watching, are enraged.

At the edge of the crowd stands Judas. The scribe who spoke in the secret meeting moves up to him and whispers:

SCRIBE
Hello, Judas.

Judas turns and looks at him.

SCRIBE (CONT'D)
Your new teacher is not a wise man. He's making powerful enemies. Trouble's coming. But, you're no fool. Why don't you come and talk with us? There might be a nice reward.

Judas' eyes are filled with interest. The scribe moves away.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE -- LATER

Followed by His disciples, Jesus walks out the front gate of the temple. Andrew looks up at the beautiful building.

ANDREW
Master, isn't the temple beautiful? Just look at it.

JESUS
Yes, look at it. In the future, not one stone will be left on another. Every one of them will be thrown down.

His followers are shocked.

ANDREW
Lord, when will this happen?

Jesus walks on in silence. John steps up beside Him.

JOHN THE DISCIPLE
Master, what will be the sign of your coming and the end of history?

Jesus turns and looks at him. His eyes are strange and powerful.

JESUS
Watch out that no one fools you. Many will come in my name saying they are the 'Christ" and they'll deceive large numbers of people. You'll hear of wars and rumors of wars. There'll be famines and earthquakes in many places. All of these are like labor pains before a child is born.

As Jesus walks the disciples listen in stunned silence.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Before I come again, the good news of my kingdom will be preached all over the world and anyone who believes in me will be hated by every nation.

His followers stare at him.

JESUS (CONT'D)
When you tell people that you're my followers they'll torture you and put you to death. When the end is very near many false 'Christs' and prophets will appear performing great miracles.
(beat)
Don't put your faith in any of them.

CU JESUS' EYES

He is seeing the future.

EXT. DARK SKY -- NIGHT

A huge bolt of lightning crackles across a black sky. Thunder roars. In the darkness hangs a full moon.

JESUS (V.O.)
My true coming will be like lightning that flashes from east to west. Everyone will see it.

SUPERIMPOSE JESUS' FACE AS HE SPEAKS.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Those days will be terrible. The sun will be darkened and the moon will lose it's light.

The moon turns a hideous, deep, blood-red.

JESUS (CONT'D)
The stars will fall and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

The sky is filled with thousands of streaking, shooting stars falling to earth. Then, one great star appears, burning with eternal Light moving closer and closer to the planet.

JESUS (CONT'D)
My sign will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They'll see Me coming on the clouds with power and great glory.
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
My angels will gather My people from all over the world.

EXT. STREET LEADING FROM THE TEMPLE -- CONTINUOUS

The disciples are staring at Him in wonder as Jesus continues speaking.

JESUS
When I come again, it will be as it was in the days of Noah, just before the great flood covered everything. People thought they were safe. But they were all destroyed.
(beat)
So, keep watch and be faithful, because you don't know on what day I'll return.

Jesus walks on. Judas is at the back of the group. Suddenly, Johanna takes his arm.

JOHANNA
Judas, can I talk to you for a minute?

They move off alone to the side of the street.

JUDAS
What is it, Johanna?

JOHANNA
As you know, I've been giving money to help the work. This morning I checked the purse and my latest gift is gone. Have you seen it?

Judas shakes his head.

JUDAS
Maybe somebody gave it to the poor.

JOHANNA
They didn't. I've talked to everyone. This has happened three times since you've been handling the money.

JUDAS
What are you saying--that I've been stealing it?

JOHANNA
No. But after the Passover I'm going to tell the Master about the loss.

She walks away. Trying to control his rage, Judas stares after her.

INT. COURT OF THE CHIEF PRIEST -- LATER

The scribe and several of the priests are in their chamber. Judas is with them.

JUDAS
Look, if you try to capture Him while He's with the crowds, you'll start a riot.

SCRIBE
So, what do you suggest?

JUDAS
I know where He goes to be alone.

SCRIBE
If you help us, we'll make it worth your while.

The scribe holds up a bag of money. Judas smiles and reaches for it. When he grasps it, his eyes become like those of the serpent.

JUDAS
Tonight, he'll eat the Passover with his followers, then, he'll go off to pray. Have your soldiers ready.

EXT. JERUSALEM STREET -- DAY

Jesus walks down a Jerusalem street. The crowds are all around him. The people are joyful. As He moves along they reach out trying to touch His robe, to be near Him.

VOICES IN THE CROWD
MASTER. GOD BLESS YOU, MASTER.
PRAISE TO GOD THAT YOU'VE COME.
OVER HERE, TEACHER. LOOK AT ME.
OVER HERE.

Jesus touches them, blessing them, smiling on them.

JESUS
(one after the other)
The Lord be with you...The Lord bless you...You are healed -- go and sin no more...May the Father be your hope and strength..Trust in the Lord your God...

A glowing smile comes to the face of everyone He touches. Zach is hiding in a wagon of hay, trying to see it all. But, suddenly, from a side street comes the sound of screaming. The crowd stops and looks.

A group of priests is dragging a terrified, YOUNG WOMAN toward Jesus. She's disheveled and barely clothed. The crowd parts as they throw her down in front of Him. She crouches in the dirt, trembling and crying. An old man who is the LEADER of the group confronts Jesus. His eyes are filled with hate.

LEADER
(sneering)
So, great teacher, welcome to Jerusalem. We've heard that you're a holy man who always does what's right. Well, here's a little problem for you.

He stares down at the young woman as though she were a lizard crawling on the ground.

LEADER (CONT'D)
This..."woman"...was caught with a man who isn't her husband. Now, the Law of Moses commands us to stone her to death. But what do you say?

Jesus stares at the men. They're all carrying large rocks. Then, He looks down at the young woman. Her eyes meet His. She's terrified. But as she looks up at Him, she's never seen such love and kindness. She drops her head and cries in shame.

Without speaking, Jesus walks in front of the priests, bends down and begins writing in the dirt. Then, he stares at them.

JESUS
Whichever one of you leads a sinless life, go ahead and throw the first stone.

One by one, Jesus turns his gaze on each of the men. It's as though He can see into their hearts. They can't quite look at Him. One by one, they drop the stones and walk away.

As Zach watches, he wipes a tear from his eyes.

When the last of the men is gone, Jesus turns to the young woman and helps her get up.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Young woman, where did they go? Doesn't anyone condemn you?

Fearfully, she looks around and is amazed.

YOUNG WOMAN
They're gone.

JESUS
Then, I won't condemn you either. Your Father in Heaven loves you. Go and sin no more.

An incredible sense of freedom fills her heart. She smiles and wipes away the tears. The crowd begins cheering. Jesus walks on. Some of the women disciples take the young woman in their arms. They wrap a beautiful stole around her. Then, she begins trying to follow Jesus.

YOUNG WOMAN
(singing)
Was it my tears or my perfume
That drew Him near
Was it my hungry heart
That brought Him here
His tenderness saw my disguise,
Saw the light here in my eyes, He
took my pain and made it disappear

The disciples and the crowd press close to Him. The young woman tries to get near, but it's not easy.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Is it what He said that gave me
Hope again
And saved me from this living
Death I'm in
I am broke, no defense, while
Others stole my innocence, He
Took me to a place I've never
Been

She passes some of the men who accused her. They glare. She keeps on following Jesus.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, He loves me
He said He loved me for myself
He saw right through me,
How well He knew me
Not like the others who loved me
For themselves

She sees Jesus touching and healing people. A blind child. An old woman bent with arthritis. A man with a withered arm. He brings them joy. She wants to see it all.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
He touched my lonely heart, not
With His hand
In a way that I will never
Understand
He reached inside my soul, I was
lost, but now I'm whole; just in
Time, as if it all were planned

As He continues down the street, the young woman slowly falls back to the edge of the crowd. In reverie, she continues her song.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, He loves me
He said He loved me for myself
He saw right through me, How well
He knew me
Not like the rest who loved me
For themselves

She looks off toward Him.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
The sunlight in the storm that's
Unexplained
He took away the fears that had
Me bound and chained
He saw the truth and I was free,
He saw the real me

In his continuing effort to get a clear view of Jesus, Zach runs along behind the crowd. But, he's so short, he barely gets a peek. Finally, he runs ahead and climbs a tree. When Jesus gets there, He walks straight over, looks up at him and laughs. Zach is freaked. Suddenly, he is face to face with the One he's been spying on for so long.

JESUS
Zacheus, come down from that tree?

ZACH
(utterly chagrined)
You...know my name?

JESUS
Of course, I know your name. I'm going to your house today.

ZACH
(amazed)
You're going where?

JESUS
To your house. It's almost lunch time and we're going to eat together.

Zach is so shocked that he falls out of the tree and lands in a heap at Jesus' feet. Everyone laughs as Jesus helps him up.

JESUS (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Zach, you're a wonderful spy.

INT. ZACH'S HOUSE -- LATER

Jesus, His disciples and a large group of Zacheus' friends are gathered around a table eating lunch. Zach's put on a big spread. He stands up in front of them all.

ZACH
Quiet, everybody, quiet. I have an announcement.

The crowd grows quiet. Zacheus turns to Jesus.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Lord...from this day on...no matter what happens, I'm following You.

Jesus smiles. The group cheers.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Wait. That's not all. Here and now I give half my possessions to the poor. And if I've cheated anybody out of anything, I'll pay back four times the amount.

Another cheer.

JESUS
(smiling)
Today the Kingdom of Heaven has come to this house. Zach is now a true child of God. The reason I'm in the world is to find and save people just like him.

EXT. HEROD'S CASTLE -- NIGHT

The king's voice is heard thundering from inside.

HEROD ANTIPAS (O.S.)
THIS IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO REPORT?

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- NIGHT

In the throne room, Herod has Zach by the throat.

HEROD ANTIPAS
(roaring)
THAT HE CAME TO YOUR HOUSE FOR LUNCH? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A SPY? WHAT KIND OF SPYING IS THAT?

But there is a definite change in Zach. Though, the king is shrieking two inches from his face, the little man is not cowering with fear. Herod can see the difference and it shakes him. He throws him down. Zach stands up.

ZACH
Your majesty, I did my best, but no one can hide from Him.

HEROD ANTIPAS
I DON'T WANT EXCUSES. THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS. EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT HIM.

ZACH
(quietly)
My Lord, he's not trying to overthrow you. He's a King, but His Kingdom isn't of this world.

HEROD ANTIPAS
WHAT OTHER WORLD IS THERE?

ZACH
Heaven. He's the King of Heaven. He says that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son. And whoever believes in Him will get eternal life. But you've gotta stop doing evil things and ask God's forgiveness. That's how you get into His Kingdom.

Herod is appalled.

HEROD ANTIPAS
YOU FREAK, YOU SOUND LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIZER. DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BECOME ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

ZACH
(calmly)
I have. When He came to my house for lunch today...I stopped being afraid.

HEROD ANTIPAS
GUARDS! GUARDS!

The guards rush in.

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
GET THIS FREAK OUT OF MY SIGHT!

They grab Zach and drag him away.

EXT. CASTLE OF HEROD ANTIPAS -- NIGHT

Carrying Zach like a bag of garbage, the guards rush outside the castle and boot him into the moat. Zach lands head first in a mud hole. When he pulls himself out, he's covered with filth, but he's laughing and he can't stop.

Over and over he yells:

ZACH
I'M FREE...I'M FREE...I'M FREE...

He's totally filled with joy.

INT. UPPER ROOM -- NIGHT

In a large, upper room in Jerusalem a hundred candles are burning. But, they can't hold back the looming darkness. Jesus and his disciples are seated, eating the Passover dinner. Judas is seated near Jesus. Jesus is very troubled. His followers can sense it and they're afraid.

JESUS
(quietly)
This is the night when Satan and his kingdom will take control. Before this night is over one of you will betray me to my enemies. And it would be better for that man if he had never been born.

The men are amazed. They talk among themselves.

VOICES OF THE DISCIPLES
Lord, what do you mean? Who is it?
Master, is it me? Am I the one?

Slowly, Jesus dips bread into a bowl. Judas dips with him and whispers:

JUDAS
Surely, it isn't me, Teacher.

Jesus stares at him.

JESUS
What you're going to do--do it quickly.

As Judas stares at Him, he becomes frightened. For a split second in his eyes flicker the eyes of the Serpent. Quickly, he gets up and leaves.

EXT. BACK STREET IN JERUSALEM -- NIGHT

Mist swirls around Judas as he strides through the darkness of Jerusalem. Torches on the walls flicker an evil light. Shadows are all around in him. Whispering is everywhere. The vermin of the city creep out of the sewers to watch him pass. Their faces are like demons. His footsteps pound louder. As Judas walks, crawling across the walls of the buildings beside him is the black shadow of the Great Serpent. It blends with his own, growing more and more horrible.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE TEMPLE -- NIGHT

Fires are lit. Torches are burning. The drifting smoke is like an evil sacrifice. A crowd of soldiers has gathered. With them are some of the priests, including the scribe who talked to Judas. They're waiting. Suddenly, Judas enters. His shadow looms large. His voice is inhumanly deep as it booms out:

JUDAS
GET READY! THE TIME HAS ALMOST COME.

EXT. PATH OUTSIDE CITY WALLS -- LATER

An evil moon shines down. Jesus and His disciples have just left the city. As they walk into the darkness, He talks to them.

JESUS
In a little while, all of you will desert Me and I'll be left alone.

The disciples are shocked.

SIMON PETER
Never, Lord. I'll die before I walk away from You.

Jesus looks at him.

JESUS
Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you'll deny three times that you ever knew Me.

Peter is amazed.

SIMON PETER
That's impossible! It just won't happen.

VOICES OF THE DISCIPLES
None of us'll leave you, Lord. We're gonna be here no matter what.

Jesus keeps on walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE -- LATER

Jesus and His disciples are in a beautiful garden on a mountain slope overlooking the city. His followers are all asleep. Some of them are snoring. Jesus has gone apart to pray alone. In a clearing, He kneels and lifts his hands to Heaven.

JESUS
Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify You with the glory We had before the world began. Soon I will leave the world. Protect those who believe in Me through the power of Your Name.

EXT. JERUSALEM STREET -- NIGHT

Down a street leading out of the city moves a horde of soldiers. Their feet pound on the stone pavement. Judas is in front of them. Their torches glow like tiny fires of hell. Around them in the smoke rise hundreds of shadowy, spirit faces -- the evil beings that fell from Heaven so long ago. The Powers of Darkness are converging.

EXT. GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE -- NIGHT

Jesus is still praying. His head is bowed. As He prays silently, His agony grows even greater. Huge drops of bloody sweat pour down His face.

EXT. EDGE OF GETHSEMANE -- NIGHT

As the soldiers follow Judas into the trees, their torches glow brighter. The eyes of Judas are the eyes of the Serpent. In them is the lust for blood.

EXT. GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE -- NIGHT

Jesus cries out in prayer:

JESUS
FATHER, ALL THE EVIL FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME IS AROUND ME...AND IT'S BREAKING MY HEART. IF THERE'S SOME OTHER WAY TO SAVE THE WORLD, PLEASE...KEEP ME FROM GOING THROUGH THIS HORROR.
(beat)
But, not My will...let Yours be done.

Suddenly, in the mist-filled garden He sees hundreds of torches moving toward Him. Drifting above them are supernatural faces of great evil. They're coming from everywhere. He's being surrounded. Quickly, Jesus gets up and walks over to Peter, James and John who are sleeping.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Are you still sleeping? Well, it's time to get up. My betrayer has come.

The disciples jump up. They see the torches. The other disciples rush to join them. Everyone but Jesus is confused.

VOICES OF THE DISCIPLES
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO'S COMING?
RUN! RUN! NO, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE.

Peter draws his sword. Then, the soldiers arrive. The disciples are surrounded. Judas walks up to Jesus and kisses Him on the cheek. But it's the kiss of the Serpent.

JUDAS
Greetings, Teacher.

SOLDIER
THAT'S HIM. GET HIM.

Instantly, Jesus' enemies move to seize him. Peter swings his sword and cuts off a man's ear. Jesus cries out:

JESUS
PUT AWAY YOUR SWORD!

His voice is filled with such authority that everyone freezes. Jesus touches the man's bloody head and heals his ear.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Am I leading a rebellion that you come out with swords and clubs to capture Me? But this is taking place that all the ancient prophecies might be fulfilled.

Judas smiles. The soldiers grab Jesus. Terror sweeps over His followers. They run as the soldiers drag Jesus away. When everyone is gone, suddenly, the trees are filled with thousands of burning angels.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
We were waiting in the trees. Ten thousand angels ready to save Him. Our swords were drawn. He knew it, but He never called. It was the night of Satan...and the Greatest King had chosen to die...alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTER COURT OF THE TEMPLE -- NIGHT

Torches are burning, but they bring little light. It's as though the temple is becoming a place of the dead. Black smoke twists and swirls in the air. Ghostly shadows with flickering eyes crawl at the corners of vision. The vermin of the universe have gathered here. This is their Night of Evil. Soldiers and servants are milling about. Several stand beside a large bonfire. Their faces are dark and haunted. Peter skulks into the courtyard. Slowly, he creeps through the shadows up to the fire. He hugs himself in the cold and mumbles to a TEMPLE SERVANT:

SIMON PETER
Lot of soldiers here. What's goin' on?

The servant stares at him with narrow eyes.

TEMPLE SERVANT
They've caught Jesus the miracle worker...
(beat)
But you should know all about it. You're one of his followers.

Peter is aghast and terrified.

SIMON PETER
What are you talking about? I don't even know the man.

Quickly, he walks away.

INT. COURT OF THE CHIEF PRIEST -- NIGHT

This is the chamber of darkness. The room is packed with priests. Seated in his raised chair is the Chief Priest. Jesus stands before him with His arms bound behind His back. Slowly, He looks around. His eyes see beyond the walls. The stone is like smoke. Surrounding this "court" is an infinity of horrible, shadow faces. These are the Fallen Ones. The Lords of High Darkness. As they stare, they whisper and laugh with a million, echoing voices.

Behind the Chief Priest in a veil of mist towers the most terrifying face of all. It's covered with leprous scales and its eyes burn with brimstone and hate. It is Jesus' ancient enemy, the Great Fallen Angel.

CHIEF PRIEST
(glaring at Jesus)
So, you're the carpenter who's been causing so much trouble. You've made many claims, but now, it's time for the truth. Swear before the Holy One. Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?

JESUS
(calmly)
I am.

He looks around at all of them.

JESUS (CONT'D)
And I say to all of you, in the future you will see Me, sitting at the right hand of God and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.

Instantly, the crowd is in an uproar. The Chief Priest tears his clothes and screams:

CHIEF PRIEST
BLASPHEMY!

Behind him, the great face of Satan is laughing.

CHIEF PRIEST (CONT'D)
HIS OWN WORDS CONDEMN HIM. GET HIM OUT OF MY SIGHT. TAKE HIM TO HEROD. HE CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.

EXT. STREET NEAR TEMPLE -- NIGHT

The soldiers drag Jesus down a street near the temple. The dancing shadow of the Serpent crawls along beside them. At every corner drift whispering shadows. The Lords of Darkness are overjoyed.

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM -- LATER

Herod and Herodias are seated on their thrones. Across the wall behind them weaves the misty form of the Serpent. The room is filled with soldiers and priests. Jesus stands bound before them all.

HEROD ANTIPAS
(smirking)
So, Jesus, the miracle worker. Water to wine, blind men that see. I've heard all about you. I've been told you're the King of Heaven. But, you don't look like a king. A king needs a robe. GIVE HIM ONE!

A soldier drapes Jesus with a purple table cloth. Herod laughs.

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
That's much better. Now, great King, do some tricks for us. Float up in the air. Turn this room into gold. Then, I'll believe in you.

Jesus remains silent and does nothing. Herod rushes up to Him and screams:

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
DID YOU HEAR ME? I WANT TO SEE A TRICK AND I WANT TO SEE IT NOW!

Still, Jesus doesn't answer. Herod grows more enraged.

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
YOU REFUSE THE COMMAND OF YOUR KING?

He strikes Jesus in the face.

HEROD ANTIPAS (CONT'D)
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A FRAUD. I MIGHT HAVE SAVED YOUR LIFE. ALL I WANTED WAS A LITTLE TRICK. GET HIM OUT OF HERE. TAKE HIM TO THE ROMAN GOVERNOR.

The guards drag Jesus away.

EXT. COURTYARD OF THE TEMPLE -- LATER

Peter is still in the Temple courtyard, trying not to be seen. Suddenly, a TEMPLE SOLDIER rushes up to him.

TEMPLE SOLDIER
HEY, THIS IS ONE OF THEM. HE WAS WITH JESUS.

Peter turns on him.

PETER
LEAVE ME ALONE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

He tries to hurry away. But a group follows him.

SERVANT GIRL
HE'S DEFINITELY ONE OF THEM. HE'S A GALILEAN JUST LIKE THAT TRICKSTER!

Peter begins yelling at them:

PETER
BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, BY THE VERY THRONE OF HEAVEN. I DON'T KNOW THE MAN! CURSE ME IF I'VE EVER LAID EYES ON HIM!

Peter rushes out the gate...

EXT. STREET NEAR TEMPLE -- CONTINUOUS

...and into the street. As he does so, a rooster crows. It's dawn. A mob of soldiers passes, dragging Jesus with them. For one instant, Jesus looks into Peter's eyes. Realizing what's happened, Peter begins to sob.

INT. HALL OF THE ROMAN GOVERNOR -- MORNING

In his cold, marble hall, Pilate, the Roman Governor, sits on his judgment seat. On the wall behind him hangs a huge, gold medallion. Engraved on it is the head of Caesar wreathed in laurel leaves. Entwined in the leaves is a serpent. Though the creature is engraved, it's eyes are real. They stare malevolently at Jesus, who stands with the mob in front of Pilate. One of the priests speaks:

PRIEST #4
My Lord, Pilate, this man has been found guilty of breaking our laws. He's been inciting riots and is trying to overthrow Caesar. He deserves to die, but only you have the power to execute him. He claims to be the King of the Jews.

PILATE
(smirking)
Is that right? King of the Jews? Well, what a miserable little kingdom you have, 'your highness.'
(beat)
Now, tell me honestly, are you really a king?

With great calmness, Jesus looks into his eyes. The look is unnerving.

JESUS
I am. But my Kingdom is not of this world.

Pilate stares at Him.

PILATE
Well, your enemies are of this world. They're accusing you of insurrection and terrorism. What do you have to say for yourself?

Jesus remains silent.

PILATE (CONT'D)
Don't you know that I have the power of life and death? One word and I could have you crucified.

JESUS
(quietly)
The only power you have is what has been given to you by my Father in Heaven.

Pilate's eyes grow wide. There is something very disturbing about this man.

EXT. ROMAN COURTYARD -- MORNING

The Roman courtyard is filled with people. Pilate stands above them. On one side of him is Jesus and on the other a criminal named Barabbas.

PILATE
(speaking to the crowd)
AT THIS GREAT FESTIVAL OF THE PASSOVER, AS A SIGN OF GOOD WILL, I HAVE CHOSEN TO RELEASE A PRISONER. WHO WILL IT BE? THE MURDERER BARABBAS, OR JESUS WHO CALLS HIMSELF 'KING OF THE JEWS?'

The crowd screams for "BARABBAS." Pilate raises his hands for silence. A bowl of water is in front of him.

PILATE (CONT'D)
THEN, BARABBAS IT WILL BE. BUT, LISTEN TO ME. I'M INNOCENT OF THIS MAN'S BLOOD. LET IT BE ON ALL OF YOU. I WASH MY HANDS OF IT.

As he washes his hands, he speaks to the soldiers:

PILATE (CONT'D)
Take him away to be crucified.

The crowd shrieks their approval.

INT. BARRACKS OF THE ROMAN SOLDIERS -- MORNING

Jesus is tied to a stake. One of the soldiers brings a crown of thorns and presses it on His head.

ROMAN SOLDIER
Every king needs a crown. Here's one for you.

The soldiers laugh as blood runs down His face. Into the room strides a gigantic man with a long whip.

CU THE MAN'S BRUTAL FACE

There is the sound of the whip cracking. Then, visible only in shadows, Jesus is beaten.

EXT. MAIN STREET IN JERUSALEM -- MORNING

A crowd is gathered. Jesus is being escorted to His death. He's covered with blood and is very weak. The heavy beam of a cross is strapped to His shoulders. In front of Him and behind Him are Roman guards. He staggers. Many women in the crowd are weeping.

EXT. THE HILL OF EXECUTION -- DAY

The most awful day in history. The Place of the Skull. Three men are being crucified. Two of them are thieves. Jesus is between them. He is lifted up, nailed to a cross. A sign above His head reads: JESUS OF NAZARETH -- KING OF THE JEWS. The other two men hang on crosses beside Him.

Jesus looks out over the crowd that has gathered. He sees His mother sobbing. With her is John, His disciple, trying to comfort her. Nearby are many of His women followers. In the crowd are hundreds of people that He has healed. There is the man who was blind, the young woman who was going to be stoned, Mary and Martha and Lazarus and many more. All of them are crying. They whisper to each other:

THE HEALED ONES
He healed me. Because of Him I can walk...I can see...He set me free.

Near the foot of the cross stands Zach. Tears run down his cheeks as he looks up at Jesus. Beyond His followers Jesus sees His enemies, the priests and the soldiers. They jeer at Him.

THE ENEMIES
SAVE YOURSELF, GREAT KING. HE SAVED OTHERS, BUT LOOK AT HIM NOW.

One of the thieves being crucified yells out:

THIEF #1
Hey, Jesus, if you're so powerful, save yourself and take us with you.

Then, he laughs. But the other thief speaks up:

THIEF #2
SHUT UP! We're getting what we deserve. But, this man is innocent.
(looking at Jesus)
Jesus...remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus turns toward him.

JESUS
(very weak)
This day...you will be with Me...in Paradise.

At that moment, there is a clap of thunder. Above them, horrible, black clouds are forming.

EXT. CLIFF OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM -- DAY

The storm clouds above the city are gigantic. Thunder is crashing. Mumbling like a man possessed, Judas runs along the edge of a precipice. In his hands is a long rope. Coming to a tree, he falls to the ground, moaning. The spirit of the serpent is no longer in him.

JUDAS
(singing)
What have I done, what have I done
What have I done to my Jesus?

Suddenly, from behind the tree, a frightening, black shadow creeps out and twists along a branch.

SATAN, THE SERPENT
Judas...Juuudas...

JUDAS
Who's that? Who's there?

SATAN, THE SERPENT
It's me. You have succeeded
You've done your job so well
You have earned your thirty pieces of silver
Now come join me in hell

Judas stares at the shadow face in horror. The serpent slithers back and vanishes into the trunk.

JUDAS
What did I do, what did I do,
What did I do to my Jesus?

He looks out over the city of Jerusalem covered with its dark clouds.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
Why didn't Jesus use the spear or sword
To fight the Roman legions
I would have fought beside him even more
We could have ruled and ran these regions

Below him in the valley, Roman chariots surrounded by soldiers are clattering past.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
Why wasn't I captain of chariots
A great revolutionary
I should have been in Roman armor
Now, I'm Jesus' adversary

I sold my soul for thirty pence
Where was my heart, where was my sense
The Romans have left me in the cold
And all that I had gained, I have sold

He looks in another direction. Huddling from the storm against the city walls are a band of beggars.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
I watched Jesus waste his precious time
Blessing the weak, the sick and poor
The weeping widows and begging orphans
The blind and the insecure

I watched as others were quickly healed
By His tender, touching hand
While I stood by silently, bitterly
He stood up and took a stand

I sold my soul for thirty pence
Where was my heart, where was my sense
The Romans have left me in the cold
And all that I had gained, I have sold

He stares at the rope in his hands.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
Jesus will die as the Greatest King
While I die a traitor
Greed and power and lust became my god
A fallen gladiator

I've turned my back on Jesus
My wicked deed can't be undone
I'll take my life for I am guilty
Now there's nowhere left to run
Now there's nowhere left to run.

He begins tying a noose in the rope.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
When He called us to follow Him
Promising a kingdom mighty and vast
He said we'd win by forgiving sin
Build a kingdom that would last

I'm a fallen man, Judas
I've dipped my hands in blood
I'm a betrayer of my closest friend
Dragged His name in the mud

Judas throws the rope over a limb of the tree. The noose hangs down.

EXT. THE HILL OF EXECUTION -- DAY

The crash of lightning. As Jesus hangs on the cross, he looks up at the sky. He can see what is invisible to everyone else. In the black clouds are thousands of hideous faces. The Fallen Ones. The Spirits of Deep Evil. He hears a roaring song coming closer and closer. It's their song of victory:

THE DEMONS
WE RULE, WE RULE
WE GO TO SATAN'S SCHOOL
WE ARE THE DEMONS WHO ATTACK
WE'RE SATAN'S SPECIAL ARMY PACK
WE'LL SEDUCE YOU AND
WE'LL THRILL YOU
THEN, WE'LL ROB STEAL
AND KILL YOU
WE RULE, WE RULE
WE'RE THE DEMONS ON PATROL
AND SATAN WILL YOUR HEARTS
HE WILL RULE YOUR SOUL

SATAN WILL RULE YOUR HEARTS
HE WILL RULE YOUR SOUL

The clouds swirl. The faces shriek and scream around Jesus like dark, birds of prey. And, above them is the hideous face of Satan. Filled with exultant joy, he cries out:

SATAN
ALL WHO DO EVIL BELONG TO ME. AND YOU ARE COVERED WITH THE FILTH OF THE WORLD.

The gigantic face rages toward Him. Jesus cries out:

JESUS
MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOUR FORSAKEN ME?

The face of Satan screams into the stars:

SATAN
I RULE. I RULE. FOR I HAVE KILLED THE SON OF GOD.

What the people around the cross see is the most terrifying storm in history filled with thunder and lightning that never stops. Jesus is in agony. His blood flows down the cross to the ground. He struggles to breathe. He's growing weaker. Suddenly, He lifts His head and cries out:

JESUS
IT...IS...FINISHED.

Instantly, there is a roar as though the heart of the universe were breaking. The ground begins to shake. The people scream and fall to their knees.

EXT. PANORAMIC VIEW OF JERUSALEM -- CONTINUOUS

All the buildings in the city are shaking. The huge Temple is moving back and forth.

INT. HOLY OF HOLIES IN THE TEMPLE -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the Temple, hangs the great curtain that guards the Holy of Holies. As the building shakes, suddenly, the curtain is torn from top to bottom, revealing the hidden place of God.

EXT. CLIFF OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM -- CONTINUOUS

The body of Judas swings back and forth from the rope on the limb of the tree. As the earth shakes, the tree falls into the precipice.

EXT. THE HILL OF EXECUTION -- CONTINUOUS

On the cross, Jesus drops His head in death. Above Him the Forces of Darkness are screaming with joy. But, suddenly, they freeze.

Up from His body rises the Burning Spirit of the King of Heaven. His hands are raised. His face shines with power and glory.

When the dark host sees Him they shriek. As thunder roars, the Light from Jesus streaks outward. Satan screams as it pierces his eyes. He and his hosts fly away. The Voice from the Throne of Heaven cries out:

PERSON OF LIGHT (O.S.)
THE PRICE FOR EVIL HAS BEEN PAID!

Then, the Spirit of the Greatest King flies upward toward the mighty throne of the Universe. The Light of God the Father flows toward Him from the Eternal Mountain. Angels SHOUT with joy and singing.

THE SON IS HOME!

As the thunder fades away, the human crowd around the cross slowly rises from the ground. A Roman Centurion looks up at Jesus' dead body.

ROMAN CENTURION
Surely, this was the Son of God.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCKY HILLSIDE -- AFTERNOON

A small group of men wends its way down a path. They're carrying Jesus' body to be buried. Some His women disciples are with them. All of them are crying. A contingent of Roman soldiers walks behind.

EXT. JESUS' TOMB -- MOMENTS LATER

They reach a new tomb carved in the hillside with a huge, round stone beside the entrance. Carefully, the men take the body inside.

INT. JESUS' TOMB -- CONTINUOUS

They wrap Jesus' body in a long shroud and lay it in a grotto. Then, they walk out.

EXT. JESUS' TOMB -- CONTINUOUS

The large stone is rolled over the door. The Roman soldiers seal it and take up positions to guard.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JESUS' TOMB -- NIGHT

The rocky hillside is silent and dark. The Roman soldiers are walking their post in front of Jesus' tomb. Suddenly, a strange light shines down around them. They look up. To their amazement, soaring in the air is an ANGEL with eyes of fire. Power flashes from him. The soldiers drop to the ground unconscious. There is a violent earthquake. The angel points at the stone. Slowly, it rolls away...and there is silence.

INT. JESUS' TOMB -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the tomb, Jesus' body lies where it was laid, covered with the shroud. Then, slowly, out of the darkness comes the sound of a roaring wind. The cloth of the shroud becomes transparent. Jesus' body begins to glow with white-hot light. It grows brighter and brighter.

EXT. JESUS' TOMB -- CONTINUOUS

Outside the tomb, the light from the cave shines into the night like a fire from Heaven...until, finally, everything is lost in its brightness.

FADE TO WHITE

FADE IN:

EXT. ROCKY HILLSIDE -- MORNING

It's early in the morning on the third day. A group of Jesus' women followers walks toward His tomb. They're carrying bottles of spices. As they walk, they cry softly.

EXT. JESUS' TOMB -- MOMENTS LATER

When they arrive, the women find that the stone has been rolled away and the soldiers are gone. Suddenly, above the entrance appears the angel who rolled the stone away. The women are terrified. He speaks to them:

ANGEL
Don't be afraid. You're looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here. He's risen, just as He said He would. Go inside and see where He lay.

INT. JESUS' TOMB -- CONTINUOUS

Amazed and frightened, the women enter the tomb. The shroud lies empty. They turn. The angel is standing behind them.

ANGEL
Now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He'll be with them very soon.

The angel disappears. In shock, the women hurry out.

INT. UPPER ROOM -- DAY

All of Jesus' followers are gathered. Zach is among them. Suddenly, they see a light glowing on the wall. It grows brighter. Then, Jesus Himself walks straight through the stone and joins them. They're terrified. But, He is smiling.

JESUS
Peace to all of you. Don't be afraid. You think I'm a ghost. Well, I'm not. Touch me and see.

Slowly, fearfully, they touch Him. Last of all Peter approaches. As he reaches out, Jesus takes his hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Do I feel like a ghost? Does a ghost have flesh and bones like I have? It's me. I'm alive. Didn't I tell you this would happen? It was written about in the Scriptures.
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
The Messiah would suffer and die to take away the sins of the world...then, on the third day, He would rise.

He lifts His hands over them. Slowly, they drop to their knees.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I'm giving you one last command. Go into all the world and tell everyone the Good News. Death is conquered. Because I have died for the sins of the world, anyone who wants it can have life that never ends in my Kingdom. What they must do is turn away from sin and ask the forgiveness of God in My Name. Teach them to obey everything I've commanded. And I will be with you always...to the very end of the age.

EXT. HILLSIDE NEAR JERUSALEM -- DAY

Hundreds of Jesus' followers have gathered. He's standing in the middle of them. Zach is close by. The little man's face is filled with joy and wonder.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to over five hundred of His followers at different times and in different places. He gave them the wonderful message that they were to tell the world. After that, on a hill outside of Jerusalem, He said 'goodbye.' But, He promised that someday He would return and bring His Kingdom to rule forever.

As His followers watch, Jesus raises His hands and blesses them. Then, He begins to ascend into the sky. They hear heavenly singing. As they stare upward, a bright cloud covers Him...and He is gone.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. EARTH AS SEEN FROM OUTER SPACE -- NIGHT

The pearl of God's creation hangs in the darkness of the universe. A tiny, golden fire is burning in the land of Israel.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
(singing)
From the moment Jesus rose
In people's hearts He lit a flame
He made disciples of them all
They proclaimed His Holy Name

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it will be...

EXT. SHORE ON THE SEA OF GALILEE -- DAY

By the sea of Galilee where Jesus taught, His followers both men and women, kneel together in prayer. They carry travel packs and staves. They rise and hug each other. Then, with joyful faces they set out in different directions, traveling two by two.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
For the rest of their days
Disciples spread good news
And though they were persecuted
They knew with God they'd never lose

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...

EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

An angry mob throws stones at two of the disciples. In the mist-filled trees behind the crowd hangs the enraged face of the Serpent.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
They weren't afraid of dying
They knew that Jesus was alive
The fire of God's Light began to spread
They knew God's message would survive

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...

EXT. EARTH AS SEEN FROM OUTER SPACE -- NIGHT

The golden flame in Israel spreads outward into Asia and Europe and Africa and India.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
Passed down through the centuries
Of God's forgiveness and eternal life
And Jesus' coming Kingdom
Would stop Satan's evil strife

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...

A MORPHING MONTAGE BEGINS

Smiling, joyful teenagers tell other teenagers about Jesus. As the Good News flows from person to person, the dress of the young people changes from Roman robes to the clothing of many tribes and lands -- the medieval dress of Europe, the robes and turbans of Northern Africa, the heavy coats of Eskimos, the grass skirts of the South Sea Islands, on down to the modern day...to kids with crazy hair and cut-off pants and skate boards telling the Good News of the Greatest King.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Are you ready for God's message?
Will you ask God to forgive your sins?
As soon as you believe in Him
An eternal life begins

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
and so it will be...

EXT. TIMES SQUARE, MANHATTAN, PRESENT DAY -- NIGHT

A huge crowd is gathered. Above them is a giant screen. On it is the face of a man whose eyes are filled with power. He is speaking, but behind his face is the shadow outline of the Serpent.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
Satan will send a false Messiah
And pretend that he is king
But Jesus will return again
And victory He will bring

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...

Suddenly, there is a roar of thunder. The crowd in Times Square looks up. A giant bolt of lightning larger than any ever seen flashes across the sky. There is the sound of a mighty trumpet.

In the huge crowd, some of the people vanish away.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
In a single moment all who believe
Will rise quickly up to Him
For a short time Satan will be in control
And things will look so grim

Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...
Time after time, time after time,
And so it will be...

EXT. THE UNIVERSE -- NIGHT

The darkness of the universe. The horizon of the earth from outer space. There is a great SHOUT. In the darkness appears the army of heaven. Angels without number. And leading them in a cloud of fire is Jesus the King. With Him are untold millions of His followers. He SHOUTS in VICTORY...and His people ANSWER with a ROAR.

Below them, the sky of the earth is like a black cauldron. It boils with evil, screaming faces. In this hideous, supernatural ocean thrashes the gigantic Serpent. He writhes in terror. Jesus points at him and cries out:

JESUS
SATAN, YOU ARE DESTROYED. INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE FOREVER.

Beneath Satan and his hosts appears a raging sea of fiery waves. With the shriek of ten million voices, the Ancient Serpent and his kingdom are cast into it. Flames roar upward into the universe. Then, they vanish and all is dark once more.

MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL (V.O.)
But at that time God will create
A holy city that will bloom
And Jesus will come down from Heaven
And will bless this new Jerusalem.

EXT. THE UNIVERSE -- NIGHT

In the darkness, descending from the stars appears a golden city, sparkling like a jewel, flowing with rainbows. A song is heard, millions of voices singing with total joy.

THE MILLIONS OF JESUS' KINGDOM
Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord
The Greatest King has risen
(MORE)

THE MILLIONS OF JESUS' KINGDOM (CONT'D)
From the earth up to the sky
Freed us from this earthly prison
Gave His life for you and I

Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

Conquering the sting of death
He has risen from the grave
Opened gates of Paradise
To all those He would save

Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

EXT. ISRAEL FROM MOUNT HERMON -- DAY

Down from the sky over Israel descends the Eternal City of the Universe. It's accompanied by millions of fiery angels, led by Jesus the Conquering King.

THE MILLIONS OF JESUS' KINGDOM
You'll hear angels singing glory
'Cause the Greatest King has come
All around the sound of trumpets
And the pounding of the drum

Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

Poets, princes, paupers, kings
All with breath will shout and praise Him
All creatures great and small
Join in harmony to raise Him

As the City gets closer and closer to earth, the whole world is made new in its rainbow light. Trees blossom. Flowers spring up in the fields. The colors of nature become ravishing. At the edge of a forest, a lion and a lamb stand watching together.

THE MILLIONS OF JESUS' KINGDOM (CONT'D)
Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

Son of God will come again
(MORE)

THE MILLIONS OF JESUS' KINGDOM (CONT'D)

On a white and wondrous stallion
Thousand angels by his side
A glorious battalion

Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

The King's the victor
With His eternal might
A new heaven and new earth
For all children of the Light

Revelation, revelation, rejoice the risen Lord
Celebration, jubilation, lift your voice up to the Lord

EXT. THE CITY OF GOD ON EARTH-- DAY

In a new world ablaze with color and light, the City of God sits on a mountain. Its streets are filled with singing throngs. The teenagers with all their different kinds of clothes, Jesus' followers from His life on earth: the men and women disciples, Mary His mother, Joseph, John, the Baptizer, Zach, Esther, the little girl, the young woman who was kept from being stoned to death, the blind man Jesus healed, Mary and Martha and Lazarus. All of them are there.

And above them all, on the rainbow Throne of Heaven that has come to earth, is the One who is the Source of all Light. He lifts his arms. Light streams from Him. He laughs with joy. His people SHOUT AND CHEER...

FOR JESUS, THE MESSIAH...

THE GREATEST KING.

FADE TO BLACK: